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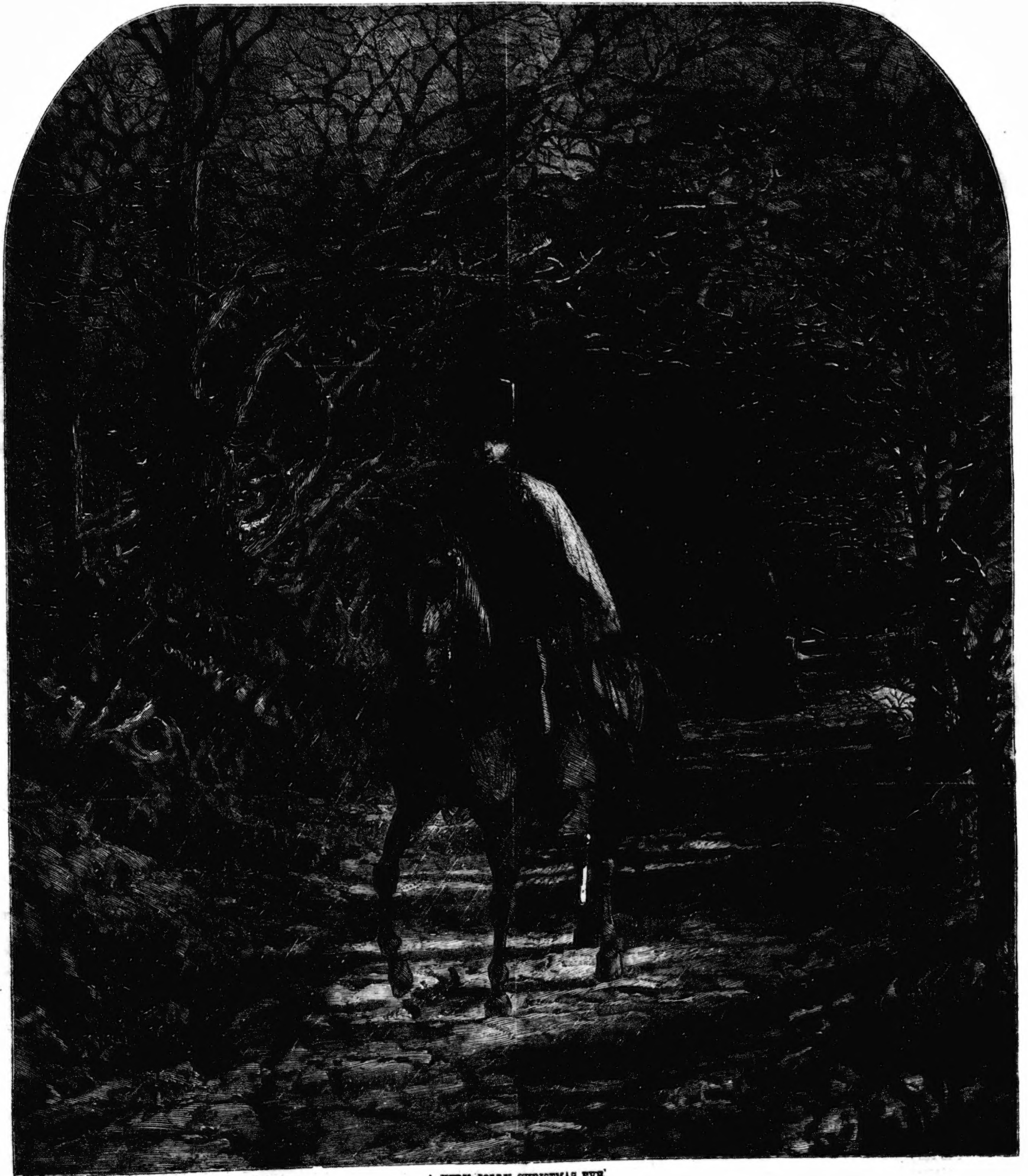
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A VERY JOLLY CHRISTMAS EVE.



## MR. COBDEN AND THE "TIMES."

BEGUN in exasperation, the quarrel between Mr. Cobden and the *Times* grows more rancorous and less edifying as it proceeds. We hope that before these lines appear in print it will have ended; but it is desirable that we should not overlook what is important in the dispute, however willing we may be to forget the temper which disgraces it.

The questions to be answered are, whether a journalist may properly indulge such criticisms as those which have provoked Mr. Cobden; and whether it is fair and wise to make such criticisms anonymously. To these may be added the inquiry whether, supposing criticism to be false and mistaken, it is tolerable to attack it as malignant.

The first question is difficult to answer, for party feeling will always come into such disputes. Our own opinion is that the comments of the *Times* by no means exceeded the bounds of honest and reasonable discussion. Mr. Bright, in the course of one of his extra-Parliamentary speeches, had dwelt much upon the hardships of agricultural labourers in England, and especially on the primal hardship of their being "divorced from the land"—that is to say, of there being no little lots of land within their reach. Among other things he said, "If we look abroad and see that in this country, so industrious and so rich, the soil, which is in every country the source of power and of freedom, is every year getting into fewer hands, then I think that we may suspect that further legislation might be applied with advantage to improve the condition of the whole population." "I should say, if we were fairly represented, that feudalism with regard to the people of England would perish, and the agricultural labourer throughout the United Kingdom would be redeemed from that poverty and serfdom which, up to this time, have been his lot. It would take a night, and would take a long speech, to go into the subject and condition of that unfortunate class. But with laws such as we have, which are intended to bring vast tracts of land into the possession of one man, that one man may exercise great political power. That system is the curse of the country, and dooms the agricultural labourer to perpetual poverty and degradation." The *Times*' comment on such passages as these amounted to this—that Mr. Bright "proposed to divide amongst the poor the lands of the rich;" that such language as his was "an incentive to working men to look over the fence of the neighbouring proprietor and learn to think that they have a natural right to a slice of the soil."

Now, here our readers have the matter plainly before them. In the first place, there are Mr. Bright's statements as to the condition of the agricultural poor, and there, also, we see his remedy for it. Next comes the comment of the *Times*—the very criticism which Mr. Cobden complains of so bitterly on behalf of his friend. Now, whether Mr. Bright really means or meant what the *Times* imputes to him is not the question. Nobody believes, probably, that Mr. Bright ever seriously designed to partition the lands of the rich amongst the poor; but what we have to deal with is his language; whether the construction the *Times* puts upon it is fair; and whether such language is not "an incentive to working men," &c. To us it seems clear that the answer must be "Yes." The *Saturday Review* has shown, indeed, by scientific demonstration, that the *Times* interprets Mr. Bright's language, not only in a permissible or probable sense, but in its only true and natural sense. However, it is not at all necessary for our purpose to insist upon so much as that. To be infallible is not an indispensable qualification for discussion, or there would be no debaters and no debate; and if Mr. Bright's words will bear the meaning which the *Times* has assigned to them, there is an end of Mr. Cobden's case, whatever Mr. Bright may have intended not to say; and we leave our readers to settle for themselves whether or not those words do bear the interpretation which we have quoted with them.

But Mr. Cobden's complaint is not confined to what he thinks the unfairness of the *Times* commentator. It seems to him, apparently, that the inferences drawn by that journalist, being unfair, are atrocious because they are unsigned by the author's name. Now, if there is any reason in this argument, we fail to discover it. The imputation of the *Times* writer would have remained exactly the same if his name had been stamped on it. It would have remained, just as it still remains, to be refuted or explained, which is the only proper or effectual way of dealing with it; the only difference would have been that, instead of refuting the *Times* writer, as he has not done, Mr. Cobden would have had a readier opportunity of abusing him, which he seems to have longed for to such a degree that he must needs rush to Printing-house-square, drag forth the editor, and there discharge upon him a torrent of expletives which mean nothing but madness. How Mr. Cobden got it into his very sound and useful head that the way to answer a charge of political crime (if it amounted to that) by a counter-charge of falsehood, slander, cowardice, and corruption, without a syllable of proof, is surprising indeed; but this is only so much mire, which Mr. Cobden himself must wash away, since it all sticks to his own hands at present. Below, his meaning is clear enough: that every criticism in a newspaper ought to be signed by the writer, or some one responsible for his opinions; because then you can not only answer him (if you are able), but you can make him cower under a look of scorn whenever you meet him "at the club." Well, if Mr. Cobden should ever think it worth while to expound what his friend really did mean in those passages of his speech above quoted, we shall be glad to see appended to that explanation a statement of the advantages of his new proposition. The newspaper writer who disagrees with even so great a man as Mr. Cobden may

be, after all, a timid person, and it may not be more difficult to make him cower under a glance of scorn than to call him a rogue; but how far does Mr. Cobden propose to supersede argument in that way? How much do such liberties as he has already taken advance the end of discussion, which is the sifting of truth from misrepresentation and error?

But the general question of anonymous writing has been debated often enough. What Mr. Cobden has added to the debate is only a signal example of its benefits; for, if he had been in utter ignorance of the men who write in the *Times*—of the name of its editor—he probably would then have defended his friend by good argument instead of degrading his own great reputation by bad language, which is no argument. Besides, in this case there was no concealment at all. The writers in the *Times* are known men. The name of the responsible editor is as notorious as that of any Secretary of State; and nothing but a sense of propriety need prevent any man who deems himself, or some gentleman of his acquaintance, injured by the *Times*, from walking down to Serjeants' Inn and asking Mr. Delane what he means by it.

On one ground we are glad this controversy has come out. If Mr. Cobden has failed to do Mr. Bright a service in the way he proposed, he cannot fail to have done so in another, which we may all partake: and that is, to lead Mr. Bright into more careful speech whenever he harangues the people. Nothing can be more different than the tone and temper of that gentleman's orations within and without the House of Commons. In Parliament the demagogue disappears: we hear only a liberal, shrewd, fearless mind expounding itself in masterly speech. There his opinions are still extreme, but they are often sound and never extravagant. It is only when he gets down to Rochdale or to Birmingham that Mr. Bright gives rein to his wilder views, and shows himself a dangerous advocate of unreason. "Views," we have written: "impulses" should have been the word. In one of those impulsive speeches he uttered language which may not represent his soberer self—indeed, we feel sure it does not; but it is ridiculous to complain if the words of so weighty a politician are criticised for what they may mean, what they seem to mean, what they evidently did mean to those who heard them—especially when the doctrine is Spoliation and the audience Discontent.

## ON DUTY ON CHRISTMAS EVE.

COMING home after dark on a raw Christmas Eve, full of bright anticipations of the cosy, curtained room, the brisk fire, and the loving faces waiting to welcome our return, we experience something like a shock when we see a rigid figure start suddenly out of the shadow of a dead wall or a deep doorway and find ourselves dazzled by a bar of yellow light shining along the pathway of the front garden. "The festivities of the season" having been sufficient to keep us in a jocund mood, even after we have left the brilliant shops of the great thoroughfares, and have traversed the dim road of our suburban neighbourhood, we are probably humming the tune of a favourite song when this unexpected apparition startles us into a becoming silence by remarking that "It's all right," at the same time wishing on our behalf that we may spend a merry Christmas. The spectre having taken the form of the local policeman, whose friendly overtures we presently reciprocate—say in the way of rum—we are led to give him credit for a good deal of kindly feeling, since, to judge by appearances, his own Christmas scarcely promises much hilarity and its inauguration could not commend itself to a choice spirit.

Once begin to reflect upon the subject and it may be discovered that to a great number of people the glorious Christmas-tide, so full of influences and happy associations, brings so very little jollity that, should their dispositions be crabbed and selfish, they are likely to become slightly misanthropic by contrasting their experiences of the festive time of year with the generally received belief. The look-out man of a coastguard station, the warder of a gaol, the waiter at a night tavern, the watchman at a bank, the keeper of a bridge toll, the sick-nurse, the driver of a night-cab, or the guard of a late train, are none of them peculiarly liable to overflow with mirth on the eve of the great Christian holiday; and the policeman on night duty in a neighbourhood at the edge of the metropolis has few more reasons for uproarious jollity. His comrades tramping stiffly on their beats in the deserted streets of the metropolis are little better off, while those who are "on duty" at the various station-houses have a bad time of it, confined as they are, in company with the flaring gas and the charge sheet, in close, foul, evil-smelling buildings, of which the adjoining cells, where the prisoners howl and swear, are by far the cleanest and best ventilated part. But the suburban duty is so long and monotonous! How the man must know the peculiarities of every door, the physiognomies of the whole row of knockers, must have counted the lamp-posts and the railings over and over again, must almost have longed for a good stirring burglary to relieve the long night before that shivering half hour which precedes the first grey streak of dawn.

Still further towards the outlying country we come upon the mounted patrol, who is better off than the ordinary policeman, inasmuch as he has his horse for company. And not bad company either; for they understand each other, and both have seen service far away from the quiet tree-skirted lane where they are now on duty beneath a dull December sky.

How the old charger pricks his ears as you come up and respond to the "Good-night!" of the former dragoon who sits him so easily, and reins up that he may let you overtake him, and so walk to the end of the lane in company! What a sense of protection you feel in that long, heavy cloak draped over the horse's flank, in the jingle of the sabre, and the firm hand upon the rein! He has been in India, has the patrol, and it was there that he got his wound—painful now, sometimes, these cold nights—which brought him his discharge. Rare work they had there, to be sure. He was in the charge himself where about half his regiment was cut up. But, Lord bless you! what could they do, our men went clean through 'em? Yes; he feels his hurt on the cold, damp nights, and was fool enough to come out a week ago without his cloak. He'll wish you good-night, as he must be at the other end of his beat. Well, it is a rather different sort of thing to the army is the police; but still not unlike as far as the mounted force goes; he's pretty well used to it; and this horse is a good 'un—old, of course, but he's got it all in him, don't you see. And so he canter slightly down the road, his sabre clinking almost cheerily as he turns round to give you a parting word. Little wonder that he should hasten back again to the spot where you first saw him, by the house where the windows are all aglow with the Christmas fire and a chorus of merry voices bursts into a song. It is a tune to which he has listened many a night; and the horse seems to know it as well as he, so gently does he bear his rider up and down, arching his neck, and seeming to walk in time, marching to the music. A happy Christmas to them both, and may the morrow be all the merrier for a sense of duty well and bravely done to-night!

M. NADAR has returned to Paris, his health being quite re-established. Mme. Nadar is still confined to her bed, and suffers much from the injuries she received in the balloon.

## Foreign Intelligence.

## FRANCE.

The Government has sustained a serious defeat in the supplementary elections at Paris and Dijon. In Paris, M. Pelletan has been returned by a majority of 5000 votes over the Government candidate, notwithstanding the whole influence of the Government was brought to bear against him, and the most unfair practices resorted to in order to blacken his character. At Dijon, also, the Opposition candidate beat the Government nominee by a large majority. The debate in the Senate on the Address was marked by one of the Marquis de Boissy's eccentric speeches, who quite startled the Senators by the onslaught he made on the obsequiousness of courtiers.

## ITALY.

The Pope has nominated, without the consent, and, indeed, contrary to the wish, of the Italian Government, several new Bishops to Sees in the former pontifical provinces, which now form part of the Italian kingdom. This fact is likely to create a strong sensation throughout Italy.

## SWEDEN.

Sweden has withdrawn from the almost concluded alliance with Denmark. The reason put forth for this step is, that as the quarrel now pending between Germany and Denmark concerns the London Treaty of 1852, Sweden cannot separate herself from the other Powers which signed or acceded to that treaty.

## GERMANY AND DENMARK.

The four German Powers deputed to carry out federal execution in Holstein have sent a summons to the Danish Government to evacuate Holstein within seven days. It is believed that the Danish Government will withdraw its troops and make no opposition, as a friendly understanding, it is hoped, will be arrived at with the great Powers.

The Federal Diet of Frankfurt have voted seventeen millions of thalers for the expenses of execution in Holstein, and have instructed their civil commissioners to assume the provisional government of that duchy in the name of the Germanic Confederation.

The Diet of Saxony have passed a resolution condemning the proceedings of the Federal Diet on the Schleswig-Holstein question, and demanding the abrogation of the Treaty of London and the recognition of the Prince of Augustenburg as Duke of Schleswig-Holstein. The draught of the address of the committee of the Prussian Chamber of Deputies also makes the same demands.

Accounts from Hamburg represent that city and Altona as in a very excited state. The youth of Altona were enlisting in great numbers in the army of volunteers for the Prince of Augustenburg.

## INDIA.

The hill tribes on the Punjab frontier have risen against our rule. On the 20th ult. they attacked the British position with great audacity, but were gallantly driven back by our troops. The fighting was very severe, two English officers were killed and five wounded, and 120 privates were killed and wounded. General Chamberlain reports that he is confident of final success.

## THE CIVIL WAR IN AMERICA.

## WAR NEWS.

The point of interest in the war had, at the date of our last advices from New York, the 5th inst., again changed to Virginia. General Meade continued his advance on the 27th ult., the Confederate skirmishers falling back before him to half a mile beyond Robertson's Tavern, on the Fredericksburg and Orange Court-house-road, where he formed his centre in line of battle. Sharp skirmishing then commenced, and was kept up by the centre and on both the right and the left throughout the day. The heaviest skirmishing was on the right, which was commanded by General French. At nightfall General French being hard pressed, and having suffered a loss of between 500 and 900 killed and wounded, besides many prisoners, fell back upon the Federal centre. The left, after considerable fighting, succeeded in joining the centre. The Federal cavalry was also engaged at different points, and met with heavy losses. In the division of General Gregg the killed alone amounted to 250; and a portion of General Kilpatrick's cavalry, which attempted to cross the Raccoon Ford under the fire of the Confederate batteries, were driven back, with the loss of 250 killed and wounded. After another attempt to advance, Meade found Lee's position too strong for assault, and retreated to the north of the Rapidan, abandoning the campaign, and, it was believed, would go into winter quarters near Washington. It was reported that Meade was to be superseded by General Sedgwick.

Quartermaster-General Meigs had submitted to Mr. Stanton a detailed official account of the battles near Chattanooga on the 23rd, 24th, and 26th ult. He states that great advantages were gained over General Bragg, but does not give the exaggerated results of previously-received telegrams, and estimates the Federal captures at several thousand prisoners and thirty cannon, which reduces General Bragg's reported losses by fully one half. The Federal losses during those three days were between 3000 and 4000 killed and wounded. General Bragg was reported to be concentrating his forces at Dalton, Georgia, where he had been reinforced by General Joseph Johnston. The Federals had retired to Chattanooga, after destroying railways, bridges, public buildings, stores, &c.; so that it would appear that the reports of the defeat and "route" of Bragg's army were greatly exaggerated. Bragg's report from Chickamauga, dated Nov. 25, says:—"After several unsuccessful assaults on our lines, the enemy carried our left centre about four o'clock to-day. The whole left soon gave way in considerable disorder. The right maintained its ground, repelling every attack."

Hooker was reported to have fought a battle on the 27th ult. before evacuating Ringgold, in which two Ohio regiments suffered severely. Confederate General Breckenridge was stated to have been killed. The publication of Grant's movements had been forbidden.

General Bragg had been superseded by General Hardee, who was preparing to resume the offensive against Grant.

Longstreet assaulted Fort Saunders at Knoxville on the 29th of November, and was repulsed with considerable loss. All was quiet at Knoxville on the 30th ult. Longstreet had been reinforced by two divisions under Bushrod and Johnson. Foster had reached Cumberland Gap on his way to supersede Burnside.

Cumberland Gap despatches to the 3rd inst. report fighting to have taken place at Walkersford, two miles from the Gap, between Foster and Longstreet's cavalry. The former, in attempting to cross the Clinch River, was repulsed with the loss of fifty men, but captured four guns.

Despatches from Charleston to the 1st inst. report that Gilmore was throwing twenty shells per diem into the city. The shelling of Fort Sumter had been discontinued.

## GENERAL NEWS.

President Lincoln was seriously ill, the disorder under which he was suffering being smallpox.

The Conservative Union National Committee, at a meeting held in Cincinnati, had nominated General McClellan for the next presidency. Strong abolition resolutions had been introduced in the Missouri Legislature. Mr. C. G. Gunther, a peace Democrat, had been elected Mayor of New York.

The Confederates keep up continual attacks on the steamers navigating the Mississippi. Thirteen steamers ran the Wilmington blockade on the 19th ult.

The Confederate guerrilla Morgan, who lately escaped along with six of his officers from prison in Ohio, had reached Toronto, in Canada.

AVARIABLE and well-selected lot of grouse, pheasants, and wild rabbits has just been shipped from the Clyde for the colony of Southland, New Zealand.



## DEATH OF THE EARL OF ELGIN.

The telegraph has forwarded to England the sad message, which for the last few days has been almost hourly expected, that the Viceroy of India is no more. The Earl of Elgin's death occurred on the 20th of November, at Dhurmsalla, a small town in the Punjab. His Lordship had been making double marches to reach the frontier at an early date, and had so over-exerted himself at the Rohtang Pass, which he crossed almost the whole way on foot, that the severe fatigue rendered him ill, and obliged him to halt at the above-mentioned place. He still expected to enter Sealkote on Nov. 3; but his condition became daily worse, and by the 6th ult. little hopes of his recovery were entertained. On the 10th he was found to be sinking rapidly, and Sir William Denison was telegraphed for from Madras; and, as already stated, the fatal change took place on the 20th ult.

For more than a thousand years Lord Elgin's progenitors have been distinguished in the history, not only of their country, but of the world. They assisted Rollo in the conquest of Normandy in 912; again, in 1066, another warrior of their line, Lord Robert de Bruce, took a conspicuous part at the battle of Hastings, under William the Norman, and on that occasion commanded the right wing of the victorious army. For the service then rendered he received from his chief large grants of land in England. One of his sons settled in Scotland, having married the heiress of the Lord of Annandale. His grandson, Lord de Bruce, married Isabel, daughter and heiress of David Earl of Huntingdon (William the Lion's brother), and eventually heiress of the Scotch crown. The offspring of this marriage consequently became a prince of the blood, and one of the competitors for the throne, at the time when Edward I. decided in favour of the feeble Baliol. His son, Robert Bruce, by his marriage with the heiress of Carrick, succeeded to that earldom, and ultimately became King of Scotland and the deliverer of his country by the memorable victory at Bannockburn. On the decease of his son, King David Bruce, his sister carried the crown to the Stuarts. For many years previous to the death of King Robert Bruce, he had resided at his castle of Clackmannan. This castle and barony King David granted, by a Royal charter which is now in possession of the family, to his cousin, Sir Robert de Bruce, a Prince of the blood Royal of Scotland, and who, on the death of King David, became the heir male of the family, and carried on the line.

The founder of Lord Elgin's line was a son of the Baron of Clackmannan. He was sent by James VI. to London, as Ambassador to Queen Elizabeth, and it was partly through his exertions that the sixth James of Scotland became the first of England. He was created Baron Bruce of Kinloss in 1602, and, following his Sovereign southwards, was sworn of the Privy Council and appointed Master of the Rolls for life. His elder son and successor having fallen in a duel with the Earl of Dorset whilst young, it was reserved for his second son to obtain the earldom of Elgin, in Scotland, with special remainder to his heirs male for ever, bearing the name and arms of Bruce, and also an English peerage. The earldom of Kincardine merged in the superior earldom in the person of Charles, fifth Earl of Elgin, somewhat less than a century ago. This nobleman was the father of the well-known collector of those exquisite specimens of Grecian art which hold so prominent a place in the British Museum, and are called, after him, "The Elgin Marbles." This Earl, who was one of the Scottish Representative Peers, died towards the close of the year 1841. His Lordship was twice married—firstly, to Miss Hamilton Nisbett, a rich heiress, who bore him three daughters and a son, Lord Bruce, who died shortly before his father. By his second wife (Miss Oswald, of Dunnikier) he had three more daughters and four sons—James Bruce, the late Viceroy of India; Sir Frederick William Bruce, K.C.B., formerly of Lincoln's Inn, Barrister-at-Law, now our Envoy in China; the late General Robert Bruce, who was Governor to his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, and died about two years since; and Thomas Charles, who is a barrister in London.

James Bruce, eighth Earl of Elgin and twelfth Earl of Kincardine, Baron Bruce in the Peerage of Scotland and of England, Lord Lieutenant of Fifeshire, K.T., G.C.B., F.S.A., and D.C.L., was born in Park-lane, London, on July 20, 1811, and was educated at Eton, whence, in due time, he passed to Christ Church, Oxford. There he was the contemporary of Lords Canning and Dalhousie, of Gladstone, Liddell, Sidney Herbert, and a distinguished knot of able men who entered public life about the same time. He closed a distinguished career as undergraduate in 1832, by taking a first-class in *literæ humaniores*, and was shortly afterwards elected to a fellowship at Merton College. He did not enter Parliament until the general election of 1841; when, the recent death of his elder half-brother (Lord Bruce) having made him heir to the earldom, he was chosen M.P. for Southampton in the Conservative interest, bearing at the time the title of Lord Bruce. His father's death, however, occurring within three or four months, raised him to the Scotch Peerage, which disqualified him for a seat in the Lower House. At a period of great political agitation in the West Indies, he was appointed Governor-General of Jamaica. He was very popular and indefatigable in his new position, and gained great credit for administrative ability whilst in the West Indies. In 1846 he was selected by Earl Grey, who then held the colonial seals, to fill the post of Governor and Captain-General of Canada, where he carried out the conciliatory policy of his father-in-law, Lord Durham; and, by preserving a neutrality between parties, by developing the resources of the country, agricultural and commercial, and by seeking in every possible way to study the wishes of the colonists, he, in a reign that extended over eight years, did more than any man to quell discontent and to knit the Canadian provinces closely to the mother country. He was so successful that, in 1849, he was honoured with a British peerage.

He returned to England from Canada towards the close of 1854. On his return a public dinner was given to him in London, at which the present Earl Russell presided, and many members of former Administrations, both Conservative and Liberal, assembled to do him honour. His Lordship held no post under the Aberdeen Ministry, nor in that which rose upon its ruins. In March, 1857, the deceased Earl was sent as Plenipotentiary to China. On his way out to the East he heard of the outbreak of the Indian mutiny, and, by a happy act of sound judgment, which was invited, indeed, by the Viceroy, diverted to India a large portion of the troops that were under orders for China, and thus strengthened the hands of Lord Canning. While the mutiny in India proceeded in its course, Lord Elgin was pushing on his own line of policy in China, the results of which he beheld in the taking of Canton and in the signing of the Treaty of Tien-Tsin.

The story of the remainder of Lord Elgin's career is soon told. Returning to England, he became Postmaster-General under Lord Palmerston, in 1859, but was shortly afterwards again dispatched to China, to maintain the dignity of the English name, by insisting on the reception of his brother, Sir Frederick Bruce, at Peking. Our readers will not have forgotten how he carried his point, and how thoroughly he humbled the pride of the head of the Celestials. Suffice it to say that the capture of Peking prepared the way for the treaty signed there in October, 1860, under which the commerce of that vast country has been thrown open to Europeans, and which will, probably, result ere long in breaking down the chief barriers that have hitherto stood in the way of the introduction of western civilisation among the many millions who are reckoned as subjects of the Chinese Empire. The same beneficial effect may be expected ultimately to follow from the commercial treaty the late Earl was instrumental in concluding with Japan, although for the time being the stipulations of that treaty have, by the hostility of a faction, been suspended.

Scarcely had he returned to the shores of England, with laurels freshly gathered, when he was selected to succeed Earl Canning in that splendid but fatal prize for statesmen's competition, the viceroyalty of India. He took up the work where Lord Canning's hands had laid it down, and he was just about to behold the first fruits of the harvest which had been sown by his predecessor and Lord Dalhousie when he was laid prostrate by the stroke of the hand of Death.

The Earl married, firstly, on the 22nd of April, 1841, Elizabeth Mary, only child of Charles Lennox Cumming-Bruce, Esq., M.P., of Roselle, county of Stirling, by whom he has issue an only child, Lady Elma Bruce. Being left a widower in 1843, he married, secondly, in November, 1846, the Lady Mary Louisa Lambton, eldest surviving daughter of John George, first Earl of Durham, by whom he has left issue a youthful family. His third son died early this year; his eldest son and successor is Victor Alexander, Lord Bruce, who was born in May, 1849, and who is now at Eton, and, by his father's early death, succeeds to the honours, estates, and representation of the family of Bruce.

## THE LAUNCH OF THE MINOTAUR.

THE launch of her Majesty's iron-clad screw steam-ship Minotaur took place on Saturday afternoon last, from the yard of the Thames Ironworks and Shipbuilding Company, Blackwall, in the presence of an assemblage computed at 10,000. Most admirable arrangements were made by the company for so large a gathering, and although probably not fewer than 3000 persons were conveyed by pontoon and small boats across the creek that divides the yard—the creek into which the ship was launched—not a single accident occurred. The dimensions of the Minotaur exceed those of any other ship afloat, and, when the Agincourt is launched from the yard of Messrs. Laird at Birkenhead, and the Northumberland from the yard of the Millwall Company, there will be three ships of the class. All three were ordered at the same time by the Admiralty on Sept. 2, 1861, and should, according to contract, have been launched six or seven months ago; but many changes, not at first contemplated, have been introduced into all the ships, and hence the delay.

Some idea of the size of the Minotaur may be conveyed to those who have not seen her when we state that her length between perpendiculars is 400 ft., her breadth 59 ft. 4 in., and her depth 41 ft. 6 in. She is of 6812 tons burden, builders' measurement, and she is to be propelled by engines, in course of making by Messrs. Penn, of 1350-horse power. Her armament is not yet fully decided upon, but it is expected that she will carry fifty guns of the largest calibre. Her internal construction is of the most massive description. The ship is built up from a keelson, formed of a huge bar of iron, about 40 in. deep. To this the iron ribs are bolted at intervals of 23 in. and 28 in. only. These ribs do not, however, rise in unbroken lengths through the whole framework of the ship, but are constructed in short lengths for the convenience of bolting to other longitudinal girders. The lower series or portions of the iron ribs vary from 10 ft. in length and 3 ft. in depth to 4 ft. in length and 18 in. depth. These vertical sections or ribs, meeting with and joining the longitudinal girders, divide the lower part of the ship into a number of square cells, forming, in fact, a huge honeycomb of iron. Viewed externally, these ribs form the side upon which the inner skin of iron plates is secured, and upon which, again, rests the timber backing, and over this the armour plates—both the timber and armour plates resting on a ledge formed on the outer side of the ribs, and commencing about five feet below the water-line. Glancing again at the interior, it will be seen that above the lower section, or joints of the vertical ribs, there are five longitudinal girders, which stretch along the whole length of the sides, and unite at the bow and stern; these intersect the ribs, and serve to give unyielding strength to the massive sides of the ship. The sides are held firmly towards each other by the thick and deep girders of iron, which stretch across the ship, and upon which the decks are laid. The upper deck is covered with iron plate, but above this is a flooring of oak. The height from the floor to the lower deck is 21 ft., main deck 9 ft. 2 in., and upper deck 7 ft. 2 in. in the clear. Running along each side of the ship, and shut off by iron bulkheads, are what are called the "wing passages;" they are 42 in. wide, and correspond with the height between decks. The wings again are divided into smaller water-tight compartments, so that in the event of a shot passing through the outer skin of the ship the water from the leak will be confined to its compartment, and through entrances by the man-holes the leak can be stopped and the fractured plate repaired. In the lower portions of the ship arrangements are made by which several hundreds of tons of water may be admitted into the water-tight compartments, the effect of which would be to steady the ship in rough weather, so as to enable her to fight her guns better, and, by lowering her several feet in the water, diminish the mark which she would otherwise offer to an enemy. The cutwater of the ship has a circular projection, similar in outline to the breast of a swan, and placed below the water-line, so that the ship may be used as a ram to run down an enemy. The force of a blow delivered by a vessel weighing some 10,000 tons, and driven through the water at the rate of fourteen knots an hour, must be something fearful to contemplate. This circular bow, with a fine edge not thicker than two or three inches, is formed of a solid forging of iron, and it projects about 7 ft. beyond the apparent line of the bows. The weight of this prominence, or beak, is alone more than thirty tons. The armour-plates on the waist of the ship are 5 in. Towards the head and stern, however, they are reduced to 4 in. The total weight of the vessel, when completed, will be about 10,000 tons. Already, with only a part of her armour-plates on her and her engines to come, she weighs over 6000 tons. Yet it is confidently expected that her speed will be about fourteen knots per hour.

The launching was managed to perfection. When the last supports had been knocked away, the first effort of the hydraulic ram moved her. Mrs. Romaine then dashed the bottle of wine against the iron bows, and the huge vessel glided at once slowly but most majestically into the river, amid the cheers of thousands. When afloat she seemed low in the water and rather down by the head, which, of course, took off something from the fine effect of her beautiful lines. When finished and ready for sea, she will, of course, be many feet lower still, and can be brought many feet lower even than that, again, by the arrangements made for admitting water into her compartments below. Still, at her very lowest trim, her portside will never be less than 9 ft. clear from the water—more than 3 ft. higher out than the vessels of La Gloire class.

The work of fitting the Minotaur with her five iron masts, and generally completing her for sea, will be effected in the Victoria Dock. It will be quite next autumn, however, before she is ready for her first cruise in search of bad weather.

THE LATE ACCIDENT AT ISLINGTON.—The inquest on the bodies of the unfortunate men who were killed by the fall of the public-house at Islington was brought to a conclusion on Monday, when the jury, after considerable deliberation, returned a verdict of "Accidental death," to which was appended a severe censure on the architect, whose defective plans, it was said, were the cause of the accident. The verdict was not unanimous, and the foreman of the jury was in the minority.

LONG-RANGE EXPERIMENTS AT SHOEBURNESS.—The first long-range target trial that has yet taken place in this country came off last week at Shoeburness. The effective practice was restricted to that with the 600-pounder, charged with 70 lb. of powder, and throwing a steel shell of 610 lb., within which was a bursting charge of 24 lb. The Warrior target, at a distance of 1000 yards, was practically destroyed by a single shell. No accident occurred, and, for the first time since the commencement of the target trials, the visitors stood perfectly exposed within a few yards of the 600-pounder witnessing the flight of the shot and shell.

DESPERATE STRUGGLE WITH BURGLARS.—The Birmingham papers narrate a desperate affray with three burglars which a Mr. Chivers, a gentleman residing at Birmingham, had early on Saturday morning last. Mr. Chivers encountered them, not together, but singly; and the one did not come to the assistance of the other till the first was pretty effectually disabled. By his courage and determination Mr. Chivers saved his property, which was all packed up ready to be carried off, administered a sound thrashing to two out of three ruffians, and, though he was unable to follow and apprehend them, yet marked them so that they are not likely to escape the attention of the local police.

THE GREAT CHRISTMAS CATTLE MARKET.—Monday was the great Christmas show day of the Metropolitan Cattle Market, and both in quantity and quality it excelled all its predecessors. There were upwards of 10,000 cattle and 26,000 sheep in the stalls by an early hour in the morning; and a brisk and animated business ensued, nearly the whole of them changing owners at fair prices. The principal favourites among the cattle were those of the Scotch, the Devon, and the Hereford breeds. The favourites of the Smithfield Club Cattle Show commanded a ready sale. The market was attended during the day by a great number of persons, among whom were several members of the market committee of the corporation.

## THE RUSSIANS IN POLAND.

The Polish insurrection is still carried on in spite of arrest, deportation, and execution, these three words having characterised the Russian policy throughout. To depopulate the most revolutionary districts and to trample out the national spirit by increased barbarity, would seem to be the course inflexibly pursued by the Muscovite rulers; but it has already been observed by a correspondent on Polish affairs that the insurrection is not an opposition sustained with difficulty and liable at any time to die out. It is a necessity, a great and widely extended inflammation of the entire national body; the necessary result of its sufferings, and never to be suppressed under present conditions, since it is only subdued in one spot to burn with greater intensity in several others.

In many instances the sons of rich landowners have taken up arms, while the fathers have observed an apparent neutrality; and to meet these cases the Imperial Government in the Polish provinces annexed to the Russian Empire has published a new edict, by which heirs to property who have joined the insurrection are deprived of their birthright by anticipation. "Having taken into consideration," says an order published in the *Wilna Courier* of the 12th (24th) of October, "that the article of the military penal code above mentioned is in full execution in Lithuania, where the property of insurgents is already being confiscated, it has been decided that the article 176 of the same code must also be applied in the provinces of Kioff, Volhynia, and Podolia; and that all persons in those provinces convicted of rebellion, or of participation in the rebellion, must have their estates confiscated, care being taken to confiscate the portions of sons which would fall to them by inheritance. His Majesty the Emperor," continues the edict, "having taken into consideration the opinion of the committee of the western provinces"—i.e., Polish provinces annexed to the Russian empire—"has deigned to approve it, and to add, with his own hand, 'To be put into execution.'"

This, then, is one of the present methods of forcibly inducing loyalty to the Muscovite rule. But the resources of Russia do not stop here; and, in order to ensure obedience in the generation which is now rising in the place of the patriots, the Czar has adopted the plan of administering a solemn oath of allegiance to the children in the Polish schools, and, at the same time, extorting from them an expression of their great affection and respect for the Emperor. Our Engraving represents an occasion of this kind, on which the military officer who exercises the functions of Assessing Inspector visited the village of Zalidcha, and, previous to his departure, had the children brought before him, and through the priest, who was also the school-master, administered to them a formal oath of obedience. After this ceremony, one of the unfortunate infants was selected for reading a complimentary declaration in honour of the Czar.

In Warsaw a new batch of about one hundred and three persons has been arrested, including several of the higher officials, such as Gliszczynski, Morawski, Dzierzanowski, and others. The learned historian Bartoszewicz, and Kucz, the chief editor of the *Kuryer Warszawski*, have been transported.

Among those lately made prisoners were the advocates Deminski, Zielinski, and Ludwig Zulewski, and Prince Subiminski, the president of the chief institution for the relief of the poor.

None of the recent events, however, have made a deeper impression than the execution of Kosinski and his four companions, of which we give an Engraving from a sketch made at the time. From the citadel there issued a funeral procession, consisting of five carts bearing the five victims of the sanguinary outrages of the Muscovite pro-Consuls. These advanced slowly to the five scaffolds which had been prepared by Generals Trepoff and Berg in the most public places of Warsaw. The five prisoners belonged to the class of workmen whose patriotism has never been denied, and who, in the time of Kosciuszko, played so important a part in national affairs. They were condemned to be shot—Janisewski in the Old Town, Raoyński in the New Town, Jagoszewski in Grzybow, Zelna in Alexander-square, and Kosinski in Bank-square. All of them were accused of the presumed intention of assassination and of being members of the National Government. The five carts were surrounded by soldiers, gendarmes, and Russian police; and, as far as deep silence could express mourning, the victims were not without sympathisers, the passengers uncovering their heads and making the sign of the cross, while many of them knelt in the streets, amidst the stifled sobs of the women. On arriving at Trola-street the procession divided, two carts going towards the old city and the other three to Senators'-street. The condemned men chatted calmly with the Capuchin priests who accompanied them, and exhibited the utmost serenity.

Towards ten o'clock the cart containing Kosinski stopped in Bank-square, and the prisoner, a fair young fellow, leaped lightly to the ground, knelt before the priest, received his benediction, and kissed his hands; then, turning towards his executioners, he took the mortuary dress and carefully made his last toilet. After his eyes had been bandaged he waved his hand as though he desired to address some words to the people, but his voice (if he spoke at all) was drowned in the roll of the drums. The victim was bound to the post; at the first discharge of muskets he bowed his head, and at the second fell forward, one more victim to the unscrupulous tyranny of the Russian rule.

JOSEPH YATES, aged twenty-six, son of a farmer at Bolton, was engaged to be married; but, because his parent refused to furnish him with means for fitting up a house, he committed suicide.

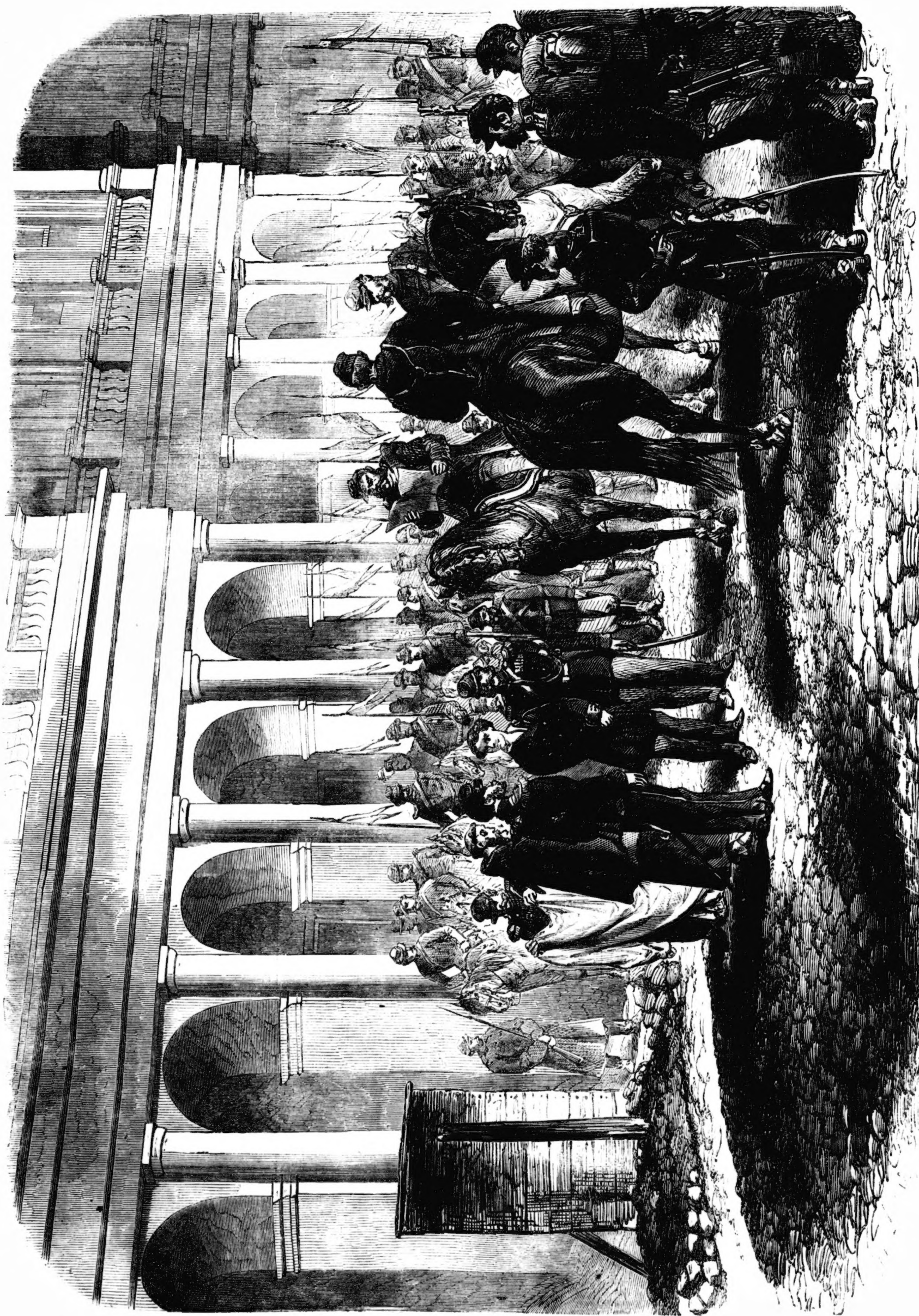
THE CROWN PRINCE AND PRINCESS OF PRUSSIA left London for Berlin on Tuesday. Their Royal Highnesses travelled from Windsor direct to Dover by the London, Chatham, and Dover Railway—being the first passengers that have been conveyed along that portion of the Charing-cross line which connects the South-Western and South-Eastern railways.

A LITERARY MAN AND KING.—One evening last month two horsemen alighted at the best hotel at Calmar, in Gothland. The landlord, who was at first most attentive to his guests, could not conceal a slight grimace when one of them, the elder, wrote on the hotel register his name, "Charles, a literary man." The travellers left next morning, but on the same day an orderly officer brought the following note to the master of the hotel:—"Sir, I intended to stay a week at Calmar; but, seeing you did not consider yourself greatly honoured by lodging an author, I have returned to Stockholm." The letter was signed "Charles, a literary man, and King of Sweden." King Charles XV. is, in fact, an author, and has just published a new collection of poetry.

MOURAVIEFF'S LAST FREAK.—The *Europe* records the following strange—and we should hope incredible—act on the part of General Mouravieff:—"In the early part of last week he went on horseback to the barracks of St. Ignace and Kazimierz, accompanied by a number of his subordinates, and, after inspecting those establishments, he set out on his return home. While passing through one of the streets, he heard a blackbird whistling the air of 'Poland is not lost!' To alight from his horse and enter the house was the work of an instant. The owner of the bird, a lad of fourteen; his father; and his mother, with a child at her breast, were brutally arrested, and the Military Governor of Lithuania with his own hand wrung the neck of the offending songster. The father of the lad who had reared the bird was taken, with his family, into the market-place, where he received one hundred lashes from a knout, his wife fifty, and the lad thirty stripes from a rod. The father fainted and was carried off to the hospital, and the mother and her children were dragged to prison."

CRUELTY TO LUNATICS.—The gentleman who published in the *Times* the particulars of the confinement of the poor lunatic at Finsbury, states that, since the publication of his letter, four fresh cases have come to his knowledge, not all of them of equal atrocity, but still so dreadful that, had he not been somewhat inured to such horrors by the experience of the Finsbury case, he should have considered these equally incredible. One of them is the case of a poor wretch who has been for two years consecratedly shut up in a box in the corner of an apple loft; no fire, no light, no companionship at any time, for he is the sole occupant of the house, his relatives living in another room 200 yards away. There is no window to this box, the only light that ever reaches its interior struggles over the top of the boarding, in the small spaces between that and the unceiling roof. "The well-known sickening stenches meet us as we enter. There lies the lunatic, crouched, with the upturned knees, which seems the rule in these cases. A raven black moustache and beard, a face pallid as snow, cramped, emaciated limbs, nails that might be measured by the inch, the limbs spotted with filth, cobwebs decorating the walls, and some mildewed spots upon them and on the bedstead, which have an ugly look." Dr. Byrne suggests that it is made a misdemeanour to have a lunatic in any family, high or low, rich or poor, without communicating the fact to the board. He suggests, also, the appointment of medical men throughout the country, whose duty it should be to visit at their own pleasure the house containing such lunatic, satisfy themselves he is well cared for, and report to the commissioners.

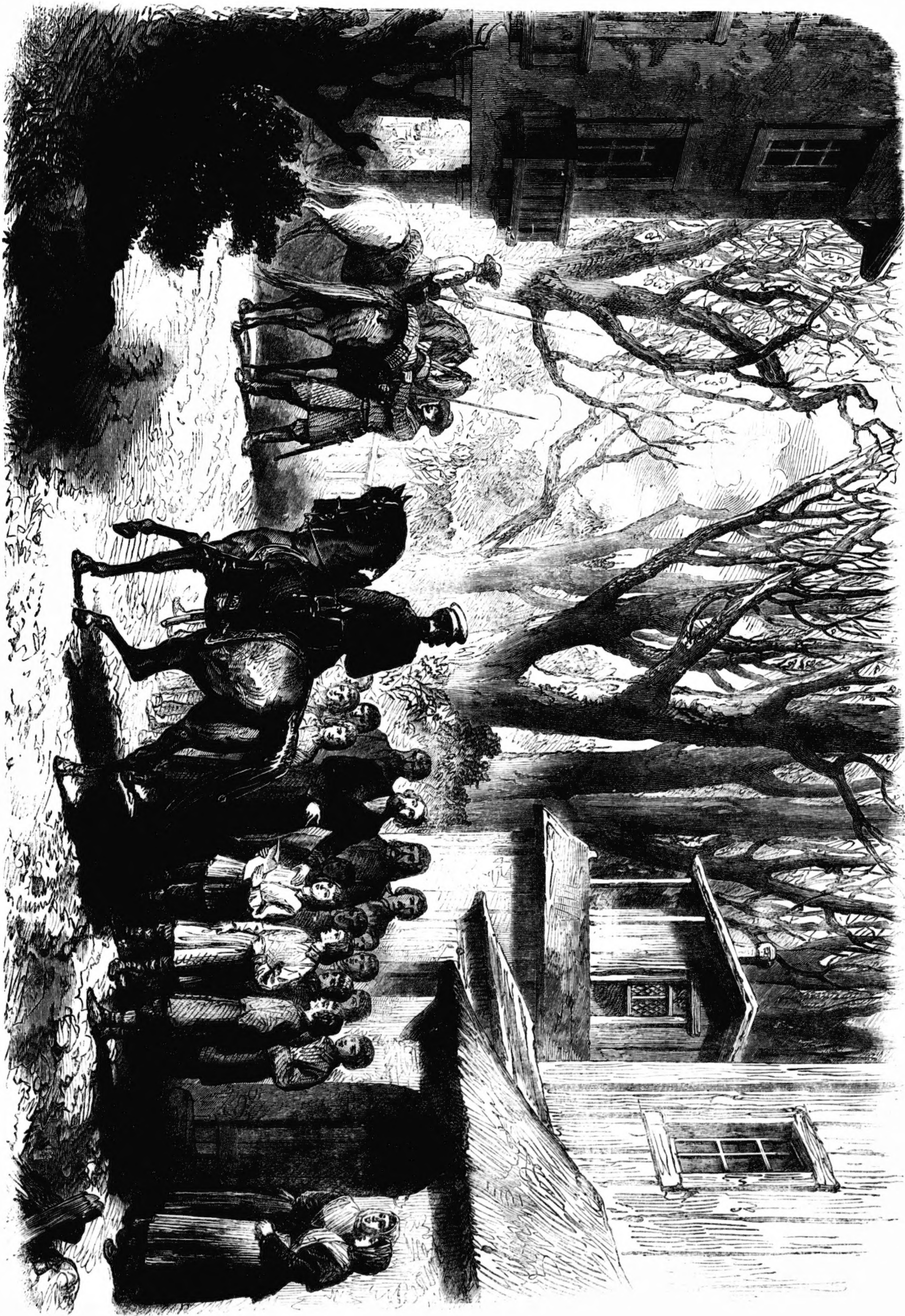




THE POLISH INSURRECTION.—EXECUTION OF KOSINSKI IN THE BANK SQUARE, WARSAW.



PRIESTS ADMINISTERING THE OATH OF ALLEGIANCE TO POLISH SCHOOL-CHILDREN IN PRESENCE OF THE GOVERNMENT INSPECTOR.—SEE PAGE 387.





**CRYSTAL PALACE.—SPECIAL JUVENILE**  
**ATTRACTIONS.**—MONDAY NEXT, and during the Week, except Saturday, Messrs. H. Wohlgenant, Pupils of the celebrated Conjuror, Robert Houdin, will perform a selection of his most interesting experiments in Physical and Natural Magic, daily, at Three o'clock. Here Houdin, the wonderful Imitator of Birds and Animals, at Half-past One.  
 Orchestral Band at 12.30 and 4, in the Concert-room. Solos on the Cornet by Mr. Levy; Clarinet, Mr. Pape.  
 Great Organ Performance at 5.15 daily.  
 Donations: Victoria Cross Gallery and Great Picture Gallery.  
 Nadar's Great Balloon, Conjuror and Car in the Centre Transcept. Visitors (with children) admitted free to view the interior of the Crystal Palace open from Ten till Six for special sittings. Lighted up at dusk. Admission, One Shilling. Children under twelve half-price.

**CRYSTAL PALACE.—THIS DAY, NADAR'S MONSTER**  
**BALLOON.** To Grand, which ascended from the Champ de Mars, Paris, and passed over Germany, Belgium, and Holland, descending in Chantilly, is NOW EXHIBITED, with Compensator attached, inflated to its full dimensions, in the Great Transcept.

**CRYSTAL PALACE.—JUVENILE DAYS.**—MONDAY NEXT, and during the Week, NADAR'S GREAT BALLOON.—Mons. Wohlgenant, the Conjuror—Herr Sussman, the extraordinary Imitator of Song Birds—and Great Fancy Fair. Great choice of carriages; all kinds of goods, including china, porcelain, and parian ware, British, Bohemian, and other fancy glass in great variety; French goods, fancies and other stationery, juvenile and gift books, ivory-work, the most extensive assortment of plated goods, jewelry, cutlery, juvenile toys and games, and every other article suitable for Christmas Presents, may be purchased.  
 Palace open for admission from Ten till Six (5.35 train from London Bridge). Palace lighted up at dusk. One Shilling. Children under twelve half-price.  
 Trains from Victoria, London Bridge, Kensington, Euston, North London, and Intermediate Stations. See time-table.

**CRYSTAL PALACE.—CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS.**  
 Commencing BOXING DAY, SATURDAY, DEC. 26. Unusual round of Amusements from Morning till Night, under the superintendence of Mr. Nelson Lee, commencing with the Chantilly Family, in their Classical Gymnastic Exercises and Acrobatic Feats; Juvenile Ballet Entertainment, entitled "Marrage à la Mode," arranged by Mr. Thompson; the great Juggler, Langlois, Volcanism; Burlesque Extravaganzas by Messrs. Aubert; the Brothers Nelson, as the Necromancer Elvira; concluding with a new Comic Christmas Pantomime (in Shadow), entitled "Harlequin Jack the Giant Killer, or Mother Goose," introducing numerous comic juvenile holiday tableaux of "Tom, Tom, the Piper's Son," "Old Mother Hubbard," "Little Jack Horner," "Polly, put the kettle on," &c., and startling effects. The whole to take place on the newly-erected Stage in the Centre Transcept.  
 Monster Christmas Tree. Great Fancy Fair and Bazaar for the sale of all kinds of Christmas Presents and New-Year's Gifts.  
 Nadar's Great Balloon, inflated to its full dimensions, with Compensator and Colossal Car. Several new and interesting Aquaria, stocked with various kinds of fishes and freshwater animals, will be added to the Natural History Department. The curious Kaffir Tree is now bearing its extraordinary fruit in the Tropical Department. The entire Palace specially and appropriately decorated with wreaths and garlands of evergreens, flags, mottoes, and emblematic designs—the whole brilliantly lighted up each evening.  
 Performances at intervals on the Great Festival Organ and by the Orchestral Band of the Company, interspersed with Concert Solos by Mr. Levy, &c.  
 Open from Nine till Six for admission. One Shilling. Children under Twelve, Half-price.

**CHRISTMAS.—Wet or Dry, Frost or Snow, the only Holiday**  
 Resort.  
**CRYSTAL PALACE.—NADAR'S GREAT BALLOON.**  
 CHRISTMAS.—In the desire to offer a specially interesting feature during the Christmas Holidays, Nadar's Great Balloon will be exhibited, fully inflated. On account of the great stage erected in the Centre Transcept for the Christmas Revels, the Balloon has been placed in the Tropical department; but, from want of height, the Mammoth Car, with its various rooms and appliances, will be exhibited a little distance from the Balloon. This vast aerial machine should be seen by every one. It is  
 THE WONDER OF THE DAY.

**CRYSTAL PALACE.—BOXING DAY, SATURDAY.**  
 DEC. 26, being kept as a general Holiday, will be a SHILLING DAY. Unusually varied combination of attractions provided for this Christmas. Frequent trains from London Bridge, Victoria, Kensington, Clapham Junction—also from Euston-square and North London Lines—will be added to the regular service. The curious Kaffir Tree is now bearing its extraordinary fruit in the Tropical Department. The entire Palace specially and appropriately decorated with wreaths and garlands of evergreens, flags, mottoes, and emblematic designs—the whole brilliantly lighted up each evening.  
 Performances at intervals on the Great Festival Organ and by the Orchestral Band of the Company, interspersed with Concert Solos by Mr. Levy, &c.  
 Open from Nine till Six for admission. One Shilling. Children under Twelve, Half-price.

**CRYSTAL PALACE.—GREAT ATTRACTIONS FOR THE**  
 CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS.—Special Amusements from morning till night. Extensive and appropriate Decorations. Monster Christmas Tree. Great Fancy Fair for Christmas Presents and New-Year's Gifts. Nadar's Great Balloon and Colossal Car. Grand Juvenile Ballet. Punch and Judy. Shadow Pantomime, and Illumination of the entire Palace. One Shilling.

**CRYSTAL PALACE.—BOXING DAY, SATURDAY**  
 NEXT, DEC. 26. Open for admission from Nine till Six. One Shilling.

**ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY-SIX really COMIC SCRAPs,**  
 all different, and printed on superfine paper of various colours, are now sent post-free for 15s. 6d. in stamps. This series of truly laughable prints, forming a most amusing and humorous collection for scrap-books, screens, or the drawing-room table, only require to be introduced to ensure plenty of mirth and jollity. Address JOHN JERRARD, 172, Fleet-street, London. N.B. Thirty-six of the above may be had as samples for 3s. 9d. post-free.

**LAST MONDAY POPULAR CONCERT BEFORE**  
 CHRISTMAS, on MONDAY NEXT, DEC. 21, at ST. JAMES'S HALL.—Last Appearance of M. Loto. Repetition of Hummel's Septet—Mons. Arbelli Godard, M.M. Barret, C. Harper, Rockstro, H. Webb, C. Severn, and Pagny. Vocalists—Mons. Ruderhoff and Mr. Santley. Conductor—Mr. Benedict. Sofa Stalls, 5s.; Balcony, 3s.; Admission, 1s. Chappell and Co., 20, New Bond-street; and Austin's, 28, Piccadilly.

**PHOTOGRAPHIC SCRAPs in immense variety, comprising**  
 Scriptural and Secular subjects from the best masters, Animal Studies and Academic Studies of the Female Figure. Price 1s. each, or 11s. per dozen. Lists sent on receipt of stamp. The trade supplied.—JOHN JERRARD, 172, Fleet-street.

**PIANOFORTES LENT ON HIRE.**—Carriage-free.  
 Option of Purchase, convenient terms, any period. The largest assortment in London of every description and price.  
 PEACHEY, Maker, 73, Bishopsgate-street Within, E.C.

**MUSICAL-BOX DÉPÔTS, 32, Ludgate-street, and 56,**  
 Cheapside.—NICHOLS Large Musical Boxes, 21 per Air; Snuffboxes, 18s. to 40s. Catalogue of tunes and prices gratis and post-free on application to WALES and CO., as above. The largest stock in London, and all best accompaniments.

**BUTLER'S BRASS-BAND INSTRUMENTS.**  
 Cornets, Saxhorns, Circulating Vibrating Horns, Drums, Flutes, &c., are manufactured on the premises, and sold at prices below those of any other English house. A written guarantee given with every instrument. Cornets from 2s. to 25s. Manufacture—20, Haymarket, London. Prices and drawings post-free.

**CONCERTINAS.—JONES and SON, 36, Cross-street,**  
 Hutton-garden, London, E.C.—Anglo-German, English construction, German fingering, mahogany, twenty keys, treble and bass, 11s. 6d. English, 4s. keys, double action, screwed notes, mahogany in covered box, 21s.; Rosewood, in mahogany box, 25s. Catalogues of other qualities gratis.

**CHRISTMAS NOVELTIES.**—The New CARVED IVORY  
 FLOWER-BLOSSOM, or Head Ornament, exquisite Model of every Flower, from 3s. 6d. to 25s. The New Comb in great variety, from 3s. 6d. A choice assortment of Clocks of every description, from 10s. to 50s. and 60s.  
 A large selection of Fine Gold Brooches, Bracelets, Chains, Watches, Earrings, Ladies' and Gentlemen's Rings. Also, a large stock of Electro, Gold, Steel, Silver, and Jet Ornaments of the latest designs, especially suited for Presents.  
 W. SCOTT, Jeweller and Watchmaker, 15, King William-street, City.

**CHINESE PRESENTS FOR CHRISTMAS.**—Visitors to  
 London and the Public generally are respectfully invited to inspect HENNETT'S WAREHOUSE, 18 and 19, Fenchurch-street, where will be seen the largest collection of CHINESE and JAPANESE PRODUCTIONS ever offered, consisting of Mandarin jades, desert and tea services, work tables, card-boxes, fans, chessmen, counters, card-cases, lanterns, gongs, hand-screens, and an endless variety of useful and ornamental articles, at very reduced prices.—Henrett's Large Chinese Warehouse, 18 and 19, Fenchurch-street, City, and Baker-street Bazaar—Manufacture, Canton, China.

**CHRISTMAS PRESENTS.—JOSHUA ROGERS'S**  
 PRIZE SHILLING BOX OF WATER COLOURS, painted and used by the Royal Family. A marvel of cheapness and a triumph of manufacturing skill. JOSHUA ROGERS'S PRIZE NINEPENNY BOX OF WATER COLOURS, containing the Ten Colours and Three Brushes, with practical directions for use, as selected by the Society of Arts. None are genuine unless marked Joshua Rogers, 13, Pavement, Finsbury-square (from 131, Bunhill-row), where they can be had; and of all Booksellers, Stationers, Colourmen, and Fancy Repositories.

**ALBUMS FOR CHRISTMAS.—THE STEREOGRAPHIC**  
 COMPANY, of 54, Cheapside; 110 Regent-street; and Agricultural Hall, Islington, have laid in a large stock for Christmas sales.  
 Morocco, with long Gilt Edge and Gilt Edge, 2s. 9d. each—hold 50.  
 Artists for Grouping. Dressing-rooms, Lady Attendants.

"There are the fine 1/2—Photographic News." "Brilliant and full of life."—Athenaeum.  
 FRAMES.—A New Department. Handsome Gilt Frames, with glass and backboard complete, 1s. 6d. to 2s. 6d. 12 by 9, and 20 by 15. A visit solicited.

**PICTURE-FRAMES.—PICTURE-FRAMES.**—The cheapest  
 in London for handsome Gilt Frames. Gilt and Black 3s. to fit the large COLOURED PICTURE given with the ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS. Maple and Gilt 5s. Country dealers supplied with every description of Gilt and Fancy Wood Mouldings at the lowest prices, at GEO. REES, 67, Drury-lane; and 34, St. Martin's-lane. Ret-b 1-het 1860.

**NEW ZEALAND.—REMITTANCES.—THE BANK**  
 OF NEW ZEALAND (Incorporated by Act of General Assembly), Capital £500,000, grants Letters of Credit, and undertakes every description of Banking business in its branch, and the several provisions.  
 Terms and Particulars on application at the London office,  
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**BROWN and FOLSON'S**  
**PATENT CORN FLOUR.**  
 For Pudding, Custards, &c., and a favourite Diet for Children, preferable to the best Arrowroot.

**SOFA and CHAIRS.—HOWARD and SONS' (late**  
 Taylor's) Easy chairs and Sofas, in every variety, at their Warehouse, 36 and 37, Berners-street, Oxford-street. Illustrated Catalogues on application.

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**SCHOOL-SHIP.—THE THAMES MARINE OFFICERS'**  
 TRAINING-SHIP, WORCESTER, moored off ERETH, is managed by a Committee of London Shipowners, Merchants, and Captains.  
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 only London Establishments are  
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 Table Knives for Christmas,  
 10s. 6d. per dozen.  
 Cheapest and best to be had in London.

**MAPPIN, WEBB, AND COMPANY'S**  
 Spoons and Forks for Christmas.  
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upon the late Derby trial for murder, upon the Windham case, and upon others which might be named, that these witnesses, whose notions are all but scouted in our courts of justice, actually hold between their fingers the liberties of the individual British subject? Any two of them, set to work by any one influenced by motives of enmity or interest, may consign any one of us to worse than prison for no greater offence than that of the exhibition of eccentricity.

No man is safe from the imputation of cerebral disease. From the time of the Apostle, against whom it was alleged that too much learning had made him mad, to our own day, when our most famous novelist prefixed to one of his own most elaborate and charming works a denial of a rumour of his own insanity, the charge has ever been a favourite weapon in the hands of envy, ignorance, and malevolence. If the modern school of "mad doctors" could only gain implicit credence, half the interesting idiosyncracies by which men of study, talent, and genius display their distinct individualities would be set down to sheer insanity. An acute reviewer has long since pointed out how easily Dr. Johnson himself might be demonstrated to have been insane if personal peculiarities and unusual habits were to be received as the test.

We have no dread of these arbiters of sanity when they come into the light of day upon public trials, and subject themselves to searching, acute cross-examination. But the aspect under which they almost invariably exhibit themselves under such circumstances furnishes, we are bound to believe, the most forcible of all possible arguments against allowing them the slightest control over the liberties of their fellow-subjects—a control exercised without practical responsibility, accompanied by scarcely the shadow of hope for appeal, and fraught with the most terrible consequences to the unfortunate victims of their peculiar crotchets.

#### SAYINGS AND DOINGS.

HER MAJESTY has commissioned Mr. Perry, the woodcarver, to execute for her another bust of Shakespeare, from a piece of Herne's Oak.

MR. JUSTICE WIGHTMAN died suddenly a few days ago, at York, while on circuit.

MR. CONINGHAM, it is announced, does not intend to retire from the representation of Brighton till the end of the present Parliament.

THE DEMOLITION OF THE EXHIBITION BUILDING at South Kensington has been commenced. Part of the building is to be re-erected at Alexandra Park, Muswell-hill.

CHEAP RATES OF POSTAGE for samples and patterns sent by post to and from Canada and the United Kingdom have been established.

A SCHEME is under consideration in America for warming houses from a central source, and furnishing citizens with heat, as gas is now supplied.

MORE THAN 100,000 PERSONS are estimated to have this year visited the Smithfield Club Cattle Show in the Agricultural Hall at Islington.

DURING LAST WEEK 168 wrecks have been reported, making a total for the present year of 2487.

MR. SERJEANT SHEE has accepted the judgeship vacant by the death of Mr. Justice Wightman. The learned gentleman was sworn into his new office on Wednesday.

TWO MEN have lost their lives, and several others have been seriously injured, by an explosion at the Green Pit, Ruabon.

NAPLES is about to be lighted with gas, oil, except in one or two principal thoroughfares, having been the means of illumination previously in use.

SATURDAY LAST, being the anniversary of the death of Thomas Sutton founder of the Charterhouse, London, was celebrated in the usual way—namely, by Divine service, a Latin oration, and a banquet in the hall of the institution.

MONDAY BEING THE SECOND ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEATH OF THE PRINCE CONSORT the Queen and the members of the Royal family attended a religious service in the Royal Mausoleum at Frogmore, which was visited in the afternoon by the servants in the households of her Majesty and the Prince of Wales.

A ROBBERY OF DIAMONDS, to the value of between 8,000,000f. and 9,000,000f., was perpetrated on the Duke of Brunswick a few days ago by a confidential servant. The thief was arrested, however, within a few hours, with the whole of the property in his possession.

MARSHAL FOREY has arrived in France from Mexico.

COLONEL CRAWLEY is reported to have taken proceedings for libel against Mr. Higgins for the article in the *Cornhill Magazine*. If acquitted at Aldershot, the Colonel will still be the defendant in the civil suit of "Wakefield v. Crawley," a claim for damages brought by another Sergeant-Major, who was arrested at the same time with Sergeant-Major Lilley.

MR. DISRAELI has proved in the Prerogative Court the will of Mrs. Sarah Brydges Williams, of Mount Braddon, Torquay, whereby the right hon. gentleman obtains a legacy of nearly £40,000. This is the bequest mentioned in a paragraph in our Paper some weeks ago.

EARL DE GREY, with the concurrence of the Lords of the Treasury, has placed Mr. Smales, late Paymaster of the Iniskilling Dragoons, on half-pay—thus annulling the results of the Mhow court-martial, and placing Mr. Smales in a position to resume the active duties of his profession when an opportunity occurs.

THE MAYOR OF CARLISLE has issued a notice changing the market-days in Christmas and New-Year's weeks from Saturday to the previous Thursday, to enable tradesmen and their servants to enjoy three days' holiday in each of those weeks.

M. EMILE OLLIVIER has been chosen to examine the difference which has arisen between the Envoy of the Viceroy of Egypt and the promoter of the Suez Canal Company. He has been requested by the Duke de Morny, in the name of the Emperor, to draw up a report on the affair.

THE CONFEDERATE CRUISER ALABAMA has made her appearance in the Indian Seas, and has destroyed two large American merchant-vessels off Java Head.

#### THE LOUNGER AT THE CLUBS.

A novice in politics who heard Mr. Layard criticise the Government when he was out of office, when he used to stand on the floor of the house and night after night attack all and sundry who had anything to do with the Crimean War, could hardly have imagined that in a few short years he would become the pliant, the ingenious, the facile Minister that he now is. Your novice could hardly have conceived that so wild an animal would so soon and so easily be broken to official harness. But the experienced were not deceived. They well knew what all this meant. They were perfectly aware that Mr. Layard was aiming at office, and that, as soon as he should get in, he would promptly accommodate his tone to his position. But even the experienced could scarcely have believed that Mr. Layard would coolly defend the destruction of Kagosima. If Mr. Layard were now standing in waiting attitude on the steps of the Foreign Office, instead of inside the door, would he defend this questionable transaction? Mr. Layard has taken the cue, and says that the destruction of the town was an accident. Well, perhaps it was. But this was the nature of the accident. The castle of the Prince is in the midst of the town; the town is built of lath and paper. The ships fired at the castle, and, of course, set fire to the town. The Admiral, perhaps, did not wish to burn the town, but only the castle; and, so far, the destruction of the town was an accident. But, on the other hand, the Admiral must have been fully aware of the inflammable materials with which the town was built, and must have known that it was quite impossible to burn the castle without injuring the town. But, again, why were shells used, or other inflammable missiles? Would it not have been enough to have knocked the castle down about the Prince's ears? Besides, it must be remembered that, accident or no accident, the Admiral took credit in his despatches for what he had done. The accident theory has been invented by the supple, ingenious official mind on this side of the water. I have no doubt that Ministers when the news arrived were dismayed and perplexed, as they must have seen that burning a town

and ruining a vast population, not to mention the slaughter—the extent of which will never be known—were facts which would require delicate handling; and, after due meditation and discussion, some "cute official, probably the First Lord himself (for no one is 'cutter' than he), suggested that the best defence would be to say that it was an accident. It is questionable, however, whether this accident theory will pass muster in the House of Commons. Meanwhile, it is worth while to ponder upon what has happened. The Japanese people are not savages; they are far more advanced in manufacturing than the Chinese. They are, in short, cunning artisans, and have factories and workshops; and no doubt a due number of these were to be found in Kagosima, where all have been destroyed: the palaces of the rich, the factories, the workshops, the merchandise, the tools and dwellings of the workmen. Verily, no one can say that Mr. Richardson has not been avenged. He has had a hecatomb sacrificed to his manes. Rest! rest! perturbed spirit! A town has been burnt; tens of thousands of innocent men have been ruined; and see what troops of pale ghosts we have sent to Hades! and all on your account.

"He hath done what he could." This praise must certainly be awarded to good old Mr. Williams, for no man has worked harder than he has to reduce our expenditure. In season and out of season, at all times and under all circumstances, whether men would listen or not, the honourable member for Lambeth has for nearly thirty years been preaching economy. Let him therefore, by all means, have this praise—he has done what he could. True, that is nothing; for now, at the end of his career, he is obliged to confess that he has achieved nothing. For thirty years he has been firing away at the Estimates, and has not been able to knock off the smallest chip. Worthy, persevering old gentleman! who does not marvel at his perseverance and patience. The fisherman who stands for hours on the banks of the New River, day after day, year after year, contented if he can but get a bite once a week, is not more patient than our Lambeth friend. It is possible, however, that, though he has not reduced an Estimate, he may have prevented increase. Let him take comfort in that thought.

The recent ill-advised vote of the National Shakespeare Committee rejecting Mr. Thackeray as one of its vice-presidents, is engaging just now not merely the gossip of the clubs, but the comments of the London and provincial press. If the result be to induce some of the eminent men who have given in their adhesion to the committee to take an active part in its future proceedings, and counteract the clique influences now at work, the movement may still prove a successful one. What confidence, I ask, can the general public feel in the proceedings of a so-called council, self-elected, and comprising the following individuals, representatives, as they style themselves in their report, of the "intellect, wealth, and commercial enterprise of the nation." Mr. R. Bell, Mr. H. N. Barnett, Mr. H. Bobb, Mr. F. Haines, Mr. J. Knight (not the B.A.), Mr. J. Levy, Mr. W. Marston, Mr. J. Oxenford, Mr. C. Reed, Mr. F. G. Tomkins, Mr. E. M. Ward, R.A. (the last-named gentleman, by far the best known in the entire list, has, I understand, since declined the honour). These are the gentlemen who, at a recent meeting of the general committee, proposed, seconded, and carried their own election by a majority of two, and constituted themselves, in conjunction with the Treasurers and Secretaries, what they are pleased to style a "Council" of the National Shakespeare Committee. Council, forsooth! This is a little too bad. The Prince, who is to be invited to accept the office of President, will, I fancy, "not march through Coventry with them," but will decline the honour, as Falstaff did on a memorable occasion, when he scorned the company of Mr. Ralph Mouldy, Mr. Simon Shadow, Mr. Francis Feeble, woman's tailor, and Mr. Peter Bull-calf of the Green, on his peregrination through the ancient town in question.

I am quite aware that since the Council of the National Shakespeare Committee carried their own election they have added the names of several better men to their body; but the question is, will these better men act with them?

Have you heard of the Amateur Fireman's Club? This is not a clubhouse wherein viands and politics, fashions and scandal, are discussed, but a small knot of patriots who, presided over by a noble Duke, don the fireman's dress and turn out regularly with Captain Shaw's brigade. Duly organised, and with headquarters at Watling-street, the gentlemen members take their turn at any work prescribed for them, and are said to be most efficient members of the force. The next time you see an engine tearing through the streets, or chance to be present at a fire, you may, therefore, without exaggeration, assume one or more of the green-coated, black-helmeted, busy men to be a swell in disguise. Without prying too deeply into motives, or asking whether it is a longing for excitement such as sent Lord Tom Noddy and friends to the Old Bailey, which has led these gentlemen to find a somewhat eccentric vent for their spare energies, let us give them credit for their perfectly harmless, if not eminently useful, hobby. To voluntarily give up, even for a time, the luxuries of their every day life, and to rough it with professional firemen, taking their full share of danger and discomfort, is a far healthier pastime than the watchman-bonneting and knocker-twisting of the last generation; and, coupled with an anecdote I have just heard, is a favourable sign of the times. No less than seventy-five officers of the Guards are members of a society for the relief of the poor—members, that is to say, not merely in virtue of having disbursed a few guineas, but in right of hard work as district visitors in the most wretched and forlorn parts of London. Is it not a pleasant thing to know that so large a number of an order often twitted with foppery and selfishness are thus devoting themselves to the alleviation of the misery in our streets? It would seem as if the dying words of Judge Talfourd were being at length realised, and as if class were at length mingling with class, to the inevitable improvement of both.

There is a very awkward story going the round of the clubs, in which the Vicar of a suburban parish figures not very creditably. Given, a comfortable stipend, a moderately-populous parish, and a residence within an easy distance of the refined enjoyments of metropolitan life, and the picture seems a tolerably happy one. Certainly, the possessor of these advantages would seem to be the last man likely to dabble in shady money transactions, to trade under the protecting alias of a fictitious firm, to put in for "managing director" a man of straw, and to adopt a "heads I win, tails you lose" arrangement with an unsuspecting partner. All this, however, is laid to the charge of a clergyman who shall be nameless, and who enjoys the advantages I have enumerated. The scandal is freely talked of and has widely spread. Why does he not come forward with a refutation?

And, apropos of refutations, I hear that Colonel Brownlow Knox is more angry than ever with Mr. Gye, and that he promises to publish "every letter, document, and fact relating to his unfortunate and much-to-be-regretted connection" with the Italian Opera.

Several friends of mine are asking on what principle vouchers were issued for the late Dramatic College Ball. It was fully attended, and eminently successful. The rooms were well chosen; the arrangements reflected considerable credit upon the committee; but the company was, to express it gently, rather mixed. There was no positive impropriety of demeanour, but a strong infusion of an element not usually found at balls of this character; and the innocent people who went in the hope of regaling their eyes with the sight of their favourite actors and actresses had but a scant opportunity of so doing. I am quite aware that neither stewards nor committee of management can compel members of the theatrical profession to attend their ball; but they might, and should, exercise their right of excluding would-be patrons rather more stringently than they do. I have heard the difficulty of refusing vouchers to intimate but indiscreet friends insisted upon; but, inasmuch as when other public balls are held, some positive guarantee is demanded; and, as that of the Dramatic College is rapidly acquiring an unenviable reputation for laxity, it behoves those interested in the permanent success of the charity and the dignity of the profession to adopt some means of obviating a growing evil.

Pray don't take for granted all that you read concerning the prize fight. I saw it from beginning to end, and have no hesitation

in saying that the sensation writing about "heavy thuds," "shaking the earth," "striking raw meat," and so on is grossly exaggerated. When two men of over six feet high determine to pummel each other until one or the other gives in, and when people are curious enough—or, if you will, savage enough—to look on thereat, they are silly to expect child's play, or to express astonishment if blows are exchanged which fetch blood or produce contusions. There was some very hard hitting, and some very awkward hugs and throws; but, as I think, scarcely enough to justify the highly-coloured descriptions I have read. The funniest and most noteworthy feature of the day was the extreme comfort of the arrangements. Every obstacle was smoothed away. We were protected by policemen at our starting; were neither pushed nor crowded; and if you have ever been to the Crystal Palace on a full day, or have attended the ministrations of the Rev. Mr. Spurgeon, or visited the opera on a crush night, or been present at a botanical fête, you have probably suffered more inconvenience than the passengers who took special train and were present at the great fight.

Have you seen the new helmets worn by some of our police? They are simply hideous, detract from the purely non-military appearance which has hitherto been aimed at, and are said to be copied from a pattern invented by the Grand Duke Constantino of Russia.

#### CHRISTMAS CHARITY.

THE arrangements made in large towns for the relief of the poor during the winter season are necessarily subject to an organisation which, while it ensures a more efficient distribution of charity, has the disadvantage of removing from benevolence that personal sympathy which can never be adequately represented by a board or a committee.

In former days, and before the metropolis had grown to its present proportions, there was less of that "public benevolence" which is satisfied to relieve its sensibilities by subscribing a guinea without troubling itself either about the application of the money or the ultimate condition of its recipients; but then a large number of the poor obtained no relief at all, and benevolence was too often deferred until it took the form of testamentary gifts, which have in our own time developed into gigantic abuses under the name of charitable trusts.

It would not, perhaps, be difficult to show that many of these amiable intentions of posthumous philanthropists have never been carried out at all, or have been rapidly superseded, if not forgotten. We should be glad to learn whether this is the case with respect to the handsome legacy (with which very few people have any personal acquaintance) bequeathed in 1766 by one Samuel Wilson, who devotes £20,000 for the purpose of lending sums of from £100 to £300 to young tradesmen of the city of London who, having been in business one year, can give security for repayment. The sum borrowed is, by the terms of the will, to bear only one per cent interest for the first year, and two per cent for each of the four following years, at the termination of which period it is to be repaid. The testator very creditably expresses his desire "that no person who may offer himself as a borrower of part of this money be refused on account of the religion he may profess, provided he be a Protestant" (a clause which, in those Church-and-King days, may be taken to be a proof of sterling citizenship); and he also earnestly requests "that this fund may never be made subservient to any party views." Whether this laudable purpose was ever executed we are unable to state; but we have never yet met with any striving young City tradesman who has benefited by the fund.

The principal charities of London, or those of them which are devoted to the immediate relief of the poor, flow through the channels of some few societies, to which a large number of people are annual subscribers. In many of them, the committees, composed of hardworking ladies and gentlemen, do dispense the funds, even to the large number of applicants, that some personal sympathy accompanies the gifts, and "charity" is redeemed from that mere mechanical organisation which has in it so little love that it can scarcely be expected to evoke much gratitude.

Amongst the most important of the mediums by which the poor are relieved are the Police Courts; and although, in periods of distress, the distribution of the poor-box funds give a large amount of extra labour to the worthy magistrates, they are generally such judicious almoners, and the cases which come under their notice are so open to thorough investigation, that the public would be sorry to see them superseded. With almost every church and chapel in London, and, indeed, in England, there is some association for benevolent purposes, and the working London clergy are valuable assistants in almost all the metropolitan charities. It has sometimes happened, even in connection with the churches, however, that when they have been associated with these "charitable trusts"—the remnants of old bequests—the funds have been applied in a way never contemplated by the testator. There might possibly be found at least one church in London where a pretty good sum of money is quietly shared amongst certain claimants, who, having the good fortune to live in a parish where there are now few poor residents, distribute the funds originally designed for the relief of such persons in a manner, let us hope, agreeable to all parties.

In many of the old churches of the City it would be difficult to realise any very active influence for the benefit of the poor, although most of them are provided with large metal-bound boxes of an impregnable pattern for the reception of alms. We remember one queer old place, too, hidden away amongst the houses in a great thoroughfare, where a distribution of loaves of bread takes place on certain Sundays in the year—a ceremony which is accomplished by the sudden appearance in the church porch after morning service of half a dozen faded old women, all of whom sniff in a humble chorus as they receive their dole from the beadle, who hands the quatern loaves out of a high cupboard like an obsolete clothes-press.

In the country parishes, or even in some suburban districts where the pastor is also the friend of his congregation, there is no need for societies which, with all their efforts, can scarcely relieve the urgent necessities of our poorer London neighbourhoods; and it is in the country church that charity, and especially Christmas charity, exhibits its most pleasant aspect. The children in the schools recognise in the parson's daughters their teachers and friends; the aged, the sick, and even the negligent and reckless, often regard the pastor as the living representation of Christian mercy and forbearance, unless he should also be a county magistrate, when, in all probability, he will have reverted from the Christian to the Jewish, or even to the Heathen, dispensation in his judgments.

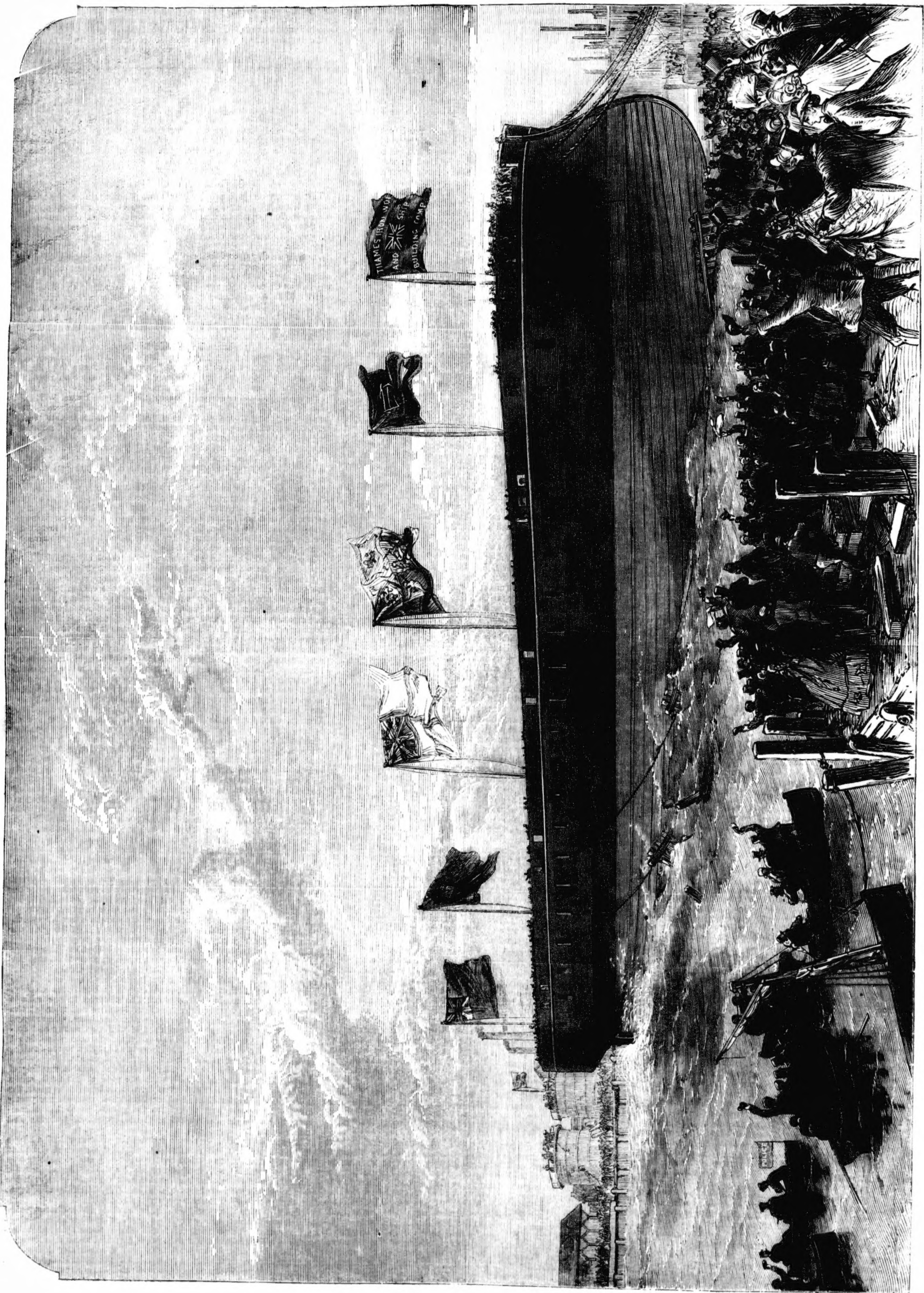
There is something very touching in the seasonable meeting of the good pastor and his family with the poor of his flock, when the bright leaves and red berries have been brought to adorn the church, and the flannel and other Christmas presents for young and old have been sent over from the parsonage to the school-room, there to be distributed with kind words of welcome and encouragement.

Heaven forbid that we should counsel the withdrawal of a single shilling from our noble London charities; but we would, if we had the power, induce our readers to try what they can do in their own neighbourhoods to relieve distress, not by the vicarious labours of committees or of boards, but by that real personal interest in the poor by which the gift seems doubled, and by which the blessing to "him who gives" is more certainly experienced.

There is, in fact, a charity which, in the truer and higher meaning of human love and sympathy, is altogether apart from mere almsgiving, and without it no gift will relieve those spiritual necessities which are unabated even when physical want is alleviated. To those who scarcely know in what way to administer this sort of charity along with their benevolence, we would point to the children who abound in every neighbourhood, and especially amongst the poor. Is there no school treat, no happy Christmas meeting, at which the lives of these little ones may be brightened? Let them be called together, not to be examined with hard questions, or to have the ordinary work of the schoolroom thrust upon them under the pretence of pleasure; but that they may rejoice in true holiday fashion, and go out into the world with a genuine love for Christmas, and for the spirit with which it has always in their memory been associated.

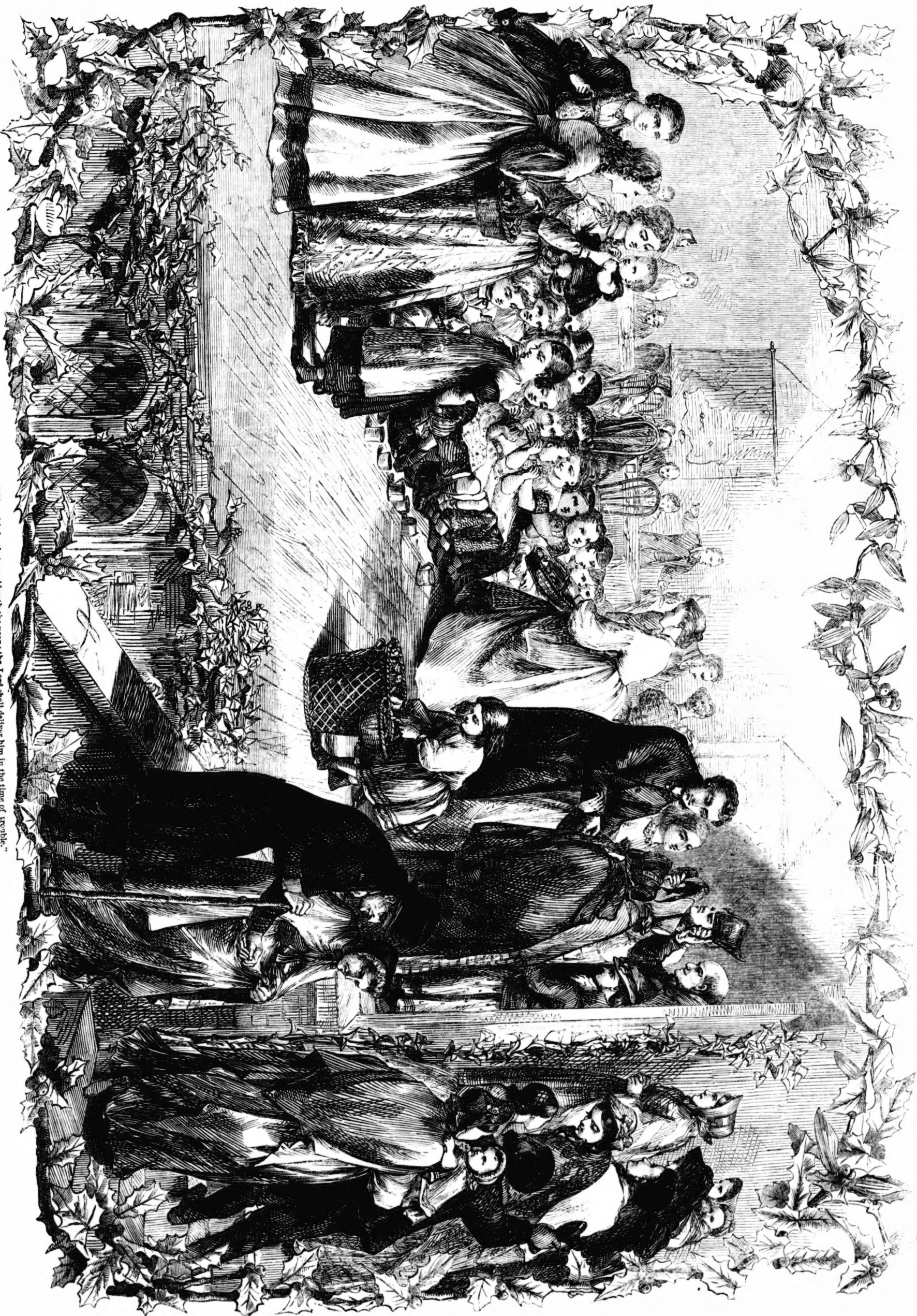
T. A.





THE LAUNCH OF THE IRON-CLAD STEAM SHIP OF WAR MINOTAUR FROM THE YARD OF THE THAMES IRON SHIPBUILDING COMPANY, AT BLACKWALL.—SEE PAGE 387.





"Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the Lord shall deliver him in the time of trouble."  
NATIONAL SCHOOL CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS TREAT—SEE P. 8, 397.



## OUR FEUILLETON.

## THE LONG RECKONING.

(Continued from page 37c.)

## CHAPTER XVII.

When there is something difficult to be said, the most difficult part of the difficulty is how to begin to say it; and the more you think of it beforehand the greater will be the number of disadvantages suggested by every possible way of beginning.

All Edmund had made up his mind about was that he would see Helen, if by any means he could, and tell her everything, let it come out as it would. Therefore he did not send for Lady Melmerby to break the news of his arrival, and give Lady Helen time to be put in an uncomfortable flurry. Indeed, he would have still less known what to say to Georgiana; for it had been agreed between him and Gaveloch that the state of the case was not to be told to Georgiana, Margaret, or Lady Matilda, except in the last extremity. But the clearing up of the present uncertainty of Strensal's position might take an indefinite time, and it was unjust to Helen to keep her a moment longer in doubt as to the cause of his importunate disappearance.

He would have spoken to her before leaving town if he had not known that it would be totally impracticable to obtain an interview. Before he could ask the father's or mother's consent, he must assure himself that his ostensible position in the world was sound and unassailable. By Melmerby's letter he concluded there might be a chance of speaking to Helen.

Helen, who did not know that anything had gone wrong which Edmund's return to her could not put right, was much more rejoiced than startled at the announcement of his name. Her colour heightened a shade and her face brightened into that sweet radiance of joy which is the best of welcomes.

That glow of loving gladness was on her face as he met the lustrous of those tender eyes. Her gladness smote him like a thrill of guilty rapture which the sting of conscience sharpens into pain. He felt he had no right to the over-mastering emotion of pride and joy which he could not smother in his heart when he saw how she loved him. He ought to have been glad to find her receive him rather coolly—to find that her vanity had been piqued by his apparent neglect. For her sake, with this dreadful uncertainty whether her love might not prove torture to her in proportion to its intensity, ought he not to have hoped her love might be as calmly amenable to contingencies as possible?

There was no time for these emotions, and the self-reproach which accompanied them, to take precise shape even in thought; but they must have tinged the fond and ardent devotion in his eyes with some element of distress; for, before her hand was clasped in his, her own expression caught the infection of anxiety, and she said, "Is there bad news? What is it? Why do you look as if you were so grieved to be so glad and pitted me for being loved so well? I am sure there is no change in that. Tell me what it is, dearest!" The last word—a faltering murmur, with a whispered close—brought silence, and she waited his reply, not venturing to look into his face after that faltering, over-bold last word. Her eyes were fixed on the great manly hand that held her own small palm and fingers safe but softly, like a tender, living thing, a bird, or a tiny leveret lightly grasped, between the fear to hurt or let escape.

"Dearest!" he said—and if he held her hand, too loth to let it go, he did his heart great violence to refrain from folding her close to that yearning heart, which seemed to cry with every maddening pulse, "Once, only once, let heart on heart beat unison of heart, and lips on lips once set love's sacred seal! Let one breath breathe the solemn words, 'My own!' and through the dark hereafter of your days the memory of that moment, like a star, shall shine through the deep winter of your soul and cheer me, unextinguished, till I die."

"Dearest!" he said, "no change can touch the love I bear to you, save change from more to more. My love burns brighter as my hope grows dim; for, since I saw you last and spoke to you as I should not have spoken if the blight had fallen earlier!"

"What has happened?"

"Doubt is cast on all I am or seemed to be. The very name I bear, and all I have, except my honesty, is jeopardised; and that I should lose also if I failed to tell you all, who have the nearest right to know all of the man who fondly dared, but dares no longer, call you now his own."

"How true your own? Have I not given myself to be yours only? If you did not know of this before I gave myself to you, and have done nothing since to forfeit me—whatever may have fallen, good or ill, is good or ill to me as well as you. For there was no provision in the gift—that I was yours, unless some accident of fortune or misfortune gave me cause to reconsider—no such guarded bond I gave you when I said I would be yours. Say what misfortune threatens both of us; but do not tell me you so lightly hold my pledged faith as to think that an ill wind can blow away what makes me all your own. Call me your own, or I shall have no heart to bear, alone, the blow you warn me of."

"My own true heart!" he said, and pressed her hand; and then he made her sit down, and told her all there was to tell. How he had hoped at first it was a mere machination of Lady De Vergund, to repay him for the part he had taken against her in Lord Gaveloch's courtship; how the man who called himself Macfarlane had winked at the mention of Julia's name; how he had failed to appear at the lawyer's, whether they went before leaving town to take with them all the family records that might be there; how he had since been looked for in vain by the detective police; so that it was still possible that he was an impostor set to work by Lady De Vergund. But in searching the records at Thorskelf, they had found traces of a real transaction on which this attempt was founded. He had felt it his duty to take every possible step to clear the mystery up now, at all hazards, in order that she might not hereafter be involved in the catastrophe which might be smouldering beneath the surface. Justice to the next heir also demanded that he should be consulted, and on opening the affair to him it was found that there had been circumstances at the time which awakened suspicion. He had given a clue to a person whose evidence would throw much light on the nature of the transaction with these wretched Macfarlanes. He and his kinsman were going down to find him and seek explanations on the morrow. In the mean time he could not leave her uninformed of the reason of his strange disappearance. It was totally uncertain how the information they would get from Crutchley would turn out. If it were unfavourable, the whole business would have to be investigated in a court of law. It was scarcely to be hoped that the disproof would be so conclusive as to avoid the necessity of his being bound in honour to let her father know that there was an uncertainty in his worldly position which would, with absolute certainty, entail her father's refusal. There might be a faint hope of such an incontestable disproof of the previous marriage—and he should keep it secret from his mother that any such question had been raised, in hopes of such a termination rendering it unnecessary to distress her with the disclosure of this dreadful secret of her husband's life. "And now that I have told you all the shame, and sin, and doubt that taint my heritage, I give you back the promise that you gave, not knowing to whom you gave it. Words are vain to tell you how I grieve that my ill-starred existence, and the love which made its light—which seemed its glory and its perfect crown of earthly happiness and heavenly hope, have turned to dust and ashes that have strewn your path with sorrow. Say you pardon me. I knew not that I did you any wrong; yet oh, what grievous wrong my love has wrought!"

"It never did me so much wrong as now, deeming my love such a loose, fluttering rag, and laid so light on fickle Fortune's wheel that one swift turn should leave it torn and soiled, lost in the dust and ashes. Do you think my love is only fit for halcyon days? If you think thus of me, why did you say you loved me? This is less than charity, and charity is surely less than love; yet charity hopes all

things till disproved. If you think thus of me, I thank the star which you call evil, that it lends me hope to let you learn me better. For my love is no fairweather fancy, like a flower that sheds its leaves in the first summer storm. Wait till my faith comes bright out of the fire, and you shall then, perhaps, believe my love is forged of the same metal as my soul, and welded into it. Oh, you trust me more than you express your trust! You leave me room for treason but to prove my loyalty! You never truly thought untruly of me! I have wronged your love to fear you feared my love would be afraid to face adversity or wear out Time with patience! You believe I am your own!"

In the energy of her utterance Helen had risen and stood before him, gazing steadfastly into his eyes, and reading the thoughts that rose to meet her speech. Her right hand she had given him as she spoke the words, "You never truly thought untruly of me;" but, as she ceased, she laid her left hand lightly on his shoulder, and her face, softened with a tender trust—as if the strong assertion of her love persuaded her she could not love in vain—still held its steadfast gaze, so full of love and loyal confidence confessed his own, that all his scruples melted in the blaze of passion, turning all his brain to fire; and how or when he knew not, there she clung, clasped heart to heart, nestling her head, half-turned, on his supporting shoulder, face to face. He kissed her trembling lips, and eyelids pure, and forehead marble pale, and the warm, soft waves of ebony-folded hair. And all her languid weight was on his arms, for all her strength fled from her but the strength of love that locked her arms about his neck, and wrapped her soul and body in that act of cleaving. Let the giddy world spin round till all the dislocated elements shattered with shocks of chaos, whirling, fell asunder, she was safe, cleaving to him.

As to Georgiana, she had discreetly betaken herself out of sight and earshot; and while this scene was going on in the boudoir at the side of the back drawing-room she was looking out of one of the front drawing-room windows, principally engaged in hoping that Lady Bexteyrmon's carriage might not return prematurely.

Though Strensal had been told that Lady Melmerby was there, it somehow never occurred to him, when he found Helen alone, to ask where Georgiana was, and the first reminder of her presence was her voice from the far distance, crying out, "Helen! here is the carriage!" After that, she came to them, looking quite unconscious of anything particular, and shook hands with Edmund, and they sat down on three chairs and their best behaviour waiting for Lady Bexteyrmon.

"I suppose," she said, "you have satisfied Helen with good reasons for leaving her under the impression you had gone to Timbuctoo?"

"She knows I was obliged to go down home on important business. I have seen more mouldy parchments and mildewed documents in the last few days than I ever hope to see again; and, what is more, I have to set off to-morrow for Torquay."

"What is it all about?"

"Business connected with the property. I have to see an old family lawyer, who cannot come to town because he has the asthma. Would you like me to lay the business before you; it would not take more than three or four hours to give you a general idea?"

"Oh, I see; it is something to do with settlements. I have no head for that; but you certainly are a cool hand, to take to lawyers and parchments before you got uncle Bexteyrmon's consent."

"I had no idea that there would be anything but hard bargaining for months to come. That must have been a false alarm about the carriage. Give her Ladyship my respectful compliments, dearest, when she comes in. I must tear myself away."

Georgiana said "Good-by!" to him first, and turned away.

"Pray that all may come right, dearest heart. God bless you, my own. Good-by!"

"Your own for ever, let well or ill betide. God bless you, dearest!"

## CHAPTER XVIII., AND LAST.

The intelligent reader is not expected to believe that anything very terrible came of the expedition to Torquay, or that the result of old Crutchley's revelations was likely to put Helen's love to a long and painful test. But though this luckily did not happen, let us trust her faith would have come "brighter out of the fire," and that she would have "outworn delay with patience."

If the scandal of a lawsuit had gathered, and sorted, and jointed, and mounted the dry bones of the skeleton in the house of Thorskelf in a transparent case for the inspection of the public at large, it would certainly have taken many uncomfortable years to get over it. But I, for my part, firmly believe that, sooner or later, all would have come right, even if the worst had come to the worst.

Crutchley must have been a clever man. We cannot ask the reader to take that long journey down to Devonshire and make the eminent retired Q.C.'s acquaintance, still less go through the wheezy eloquence of his perspicuous statement. It is sufficient to say that he satisfied old Ralph Strensal (who, be it remembered, was a country squire out at elbows in his finances, and had the strongest interest in being difficult to convince) that there was not a vestige of proof of the Scotch marriage.

The whole force of the threat lay in making an exposure of the unquestionable fact that Janet Macfarlane had been Arthur Strensal's mistress. The assertion of marriage was only the mechanism by which an inquiry could be forced to show the facts as they were. The evidence collected, and of which Crutchley still had the notes at his chambers, was such as would with perfect certainty refute the marriage claim; but, if it had come out at the time, was of such a nature as must have broken off the match with Lady Matilda.

All the papers were to be kept by Crutchley till his death, and then consigned, by a clause in his will, to the head of the Thorskelf family then in being.

There was among the papers a bond, under the hand and seal of J. A. M.—, for a loan of a thousand pounds, to be recoverable on breach of his engagement not to molest or disturb the family with further mention of the affair. Any publication of the matter which could be traced to him would render him liable to the recovery of this sum.

There could be no objection, at this distance of time, to Mr. Ralph Strensal and his legal adviser going over the papers, which, on the party's return to town, was accordingly done, and the matter was finally set at rest.

The six thousand pounds which had come back by the Australian mail, being considered as ill-omened property that had a tendency to go to the dogs, was, so to speak, thrown into the kennel. Since Arthur Strensal's death, Ralph had kept the Balderland pack with a subsidy, first from Edmund's grandfather, and then from Edmund himself.

It was considered that Ralph had been a loser by this arrangement; and as Edmund wished to have the pack in his own hands again, he made over this sum to cover the deficit and re-purchase the hounds and the superfluities of the Midgarth hunting stud.

As the pack had originally been handed over without purchase, and had been principally supported by the Thorskelf subsidy during the interval, this was practically making the old squire a present of the money, to console him for the disappointment and trouble he had sustained by having those brilliant possibilities dangled before his eyes; but he was easily persuaded to look at it as a commercial transaction.

It was certainly very handsome and liberal of Edmund, but from first to last the hounds had hurt Ralph. He had a large family of sons who had been trying all their lives to provide for themselves by riding over breakneck fences, without greater success than now and then breaking a few ribs or an odd collarbone or so.

The curious part of this bargain was that it implied such contradictory assumptions. It was because he was keeping somebody else's pack that he had received a subsidy for their support. It was partly because the pack had come by prescription to be looked upon as his own, and partly because the subsidy had not entirely covered the expenses of the hunt, that he was to receive compensation. But the long and the short of it was that Edmund wanted to be rid of the £6000, which would come in very handy to his cousin Ralph, and the

transfer of the pack gave a colourable pretext for the transfer of the money.

Edmund might have bought a diamond necklace with it, or refurnished his house with it, or built a church with it, but he preferred to square up his kinsman's banker's book with it; and, over a bottle of twenty port, a loose financial statement was made, the bargain struck, and Ralph returned to his Lares and Penates relieved of some of his most troublesome anxieties. For the small unfunded debts are the blisters of a muddled country gentleman's peace of mind.

On the 9th of October of the same year Edmund Strensal, of Thorskelf Castle, in the county of Balderland, M.P., was united to Lady Helen St. Geobray, only daughter of the Earl of Bexteyrmon, G.C.B. The terms of the settlement, the magnificence of the trousseau, the plethora of wedding presents, the dresses of the bridesmaids, and the distinction of the guests assembled at the Earl's princely seat of Spondon, in the county of Hoderford, are left to the reader's fertile imagination.

Lord Beltane, having taken a final farewell of all earthly hope of happiness in a heartrending sonnet over night, officiated as best man; looked very picturesque and woebegone at the altar; spoke a pretty, touching little speech at the breakfast; and made a deep impression on the prettiest of the bridesmaids, which, we will hope, led to a happier reconsideration of his blighted destinies in due time.

Lord Bexteyrmon spoke as became a heavy father and a Cabinet Minister, and did not omit to say that, "if he had sought through the length and breadth of the land for a husband to whom he could confidently intrust the happiness of his darling daughter, he could not have found," &c.; at which point Sydney, Earl of Mascester, could not help (inaudibly, of course) forming some undutiful phrase, including the words "old humbug!"

Edmund bore his happiness bravely—with that equal mind which the most quotable of poets recommends, "Rebus in arduis, haud secus in bonis" ("Restrained from all rash insolence of joy").

Marriage is, perhaps, the one event in a man's life which most combines the auspicious with the arduous, and it is no small praise to say that he behaved himself at his own marriage like a man.

Helen went through her share of the proceedings like the fairy impersonation of ideal beauty and delight in a radiant dream. There was just enough of the tender regrets of parting from her home to touch her happiness with that sweet grace of pathos which becomes a bride as the freshness of the sunlit morning dew becomes an opening flower.

Whether they went for their honeymoon does not much matter to us; nor did it much matter to them, for all their world was turned to fairyland.

The stormy weather of the equinox could raise no gales, no whirlwinds swift enough to overtake their travelling equipage.

The wings of love, when love is on the wing, outstrip the wind; or, if love perches down, the wings of love are shelter soft and warm, impervious to keenest piercing blasts of the shrewd east or boisterous, blustering north. They had such stores of sunshine in their hearts as would have brightened scores of rainy days, if there were rainy days in fairyland. So, wherever they went, we may be sure love's light went with them; and whenever they came home they found love's light burning brightly on their hearth. Indeed, it is almost superfluous on our part, in bidding them farewell, to wish them joy.

As for the remnant of the wicked, and the demands of poetical justice, Macfarlane got safe to America, and died there in the character of a blind beggar, having had the misfortune to be gouged by an enlightened patriot whom he had cheated at cards on board a river steamer. His Greenock accomplices were hanged for the murder of a real bagman, on whom they operated less successfully than on *feu M. Dupont*.

Lord De Vergund lived to enjoy his paralytic symptoms, complicated with an unmerited imputation of having privily made away with his Marchioness. He died by an overdose of the prussic acid and strychnine mixture which he took for his complaint.

Dr. Mervyn had a narrow escape of conviction on his trial for having administered the same with intent to destroy life; but he got off. There was an informality, however, in the codicil to Lord De Vergund's will, by which a large sum was bequeathed to his domestic physician; and this bequest the Duke of Truckleborough, on behalf of his wife, successfully resisted.

Lady Adela Fitzmaurice has got over her *angina pectoris* and her weakness for the domestic physician. She is still unmarried; but she has a lapdog and a melancholy parrot, whose main accomplishment is the accurate imitation of a deep-drawn sigh.

THE END.

## CONCERTS.

"MR. AND MRS. ELLIOT GALER'S (late Fanny Reeves) New Lyric Entertainment"—we quote the neatly-printed book of words, without altering a letter or adding a stop—postponed a week on account of the lady's indisposition, was actually produced on Monday last. It is the first result of the example set by Mr. German Reed, and consists, in fact, of two operettas, and both written for two singers only. The text has been supplied by Mr. Wooler, whose numerous and elegant Strand pieces are well known to all theatrical readers. The plot of each may be told in very few words. Cousin Kate, then, is a certain wilful young lady who, it appears, has been bequeathed as a legacy to Lieutenant Vernon. As they are thus condemned to marry, they, of course, hate each other *d'avance*, and, in the course of a quarrelsome conversation, the lady declares her intention of attending a masked ball, attired as a *debardeur*. Her cousin objects strongly to the proposal; but when the headstrong Kate re-enters in the forbidden disguise, Vernon gives free vent to his admiration, believing the masked figure to be one Cousin Sophy. Of course he then gives his consent, of course she then declines to avail herself of it, and of course the curtain falls on the happiest couple in the world. The second piece is just as light in construction as the first. "The Haunted Mill"—to quote the title of the operetta—has been selected as a safe and quiet place of rendezvous by a Jacobite officer and by a village girl. The conspirator proposes to meet a fellow Jacobite, and the maiden hopes to meet a rustic sweetheart; but both are disappointed by meeting each other only. The object of each is to get rid of the other; but Careless's offers of money and threats of kisses prove equally ineffectual to dislodge the lady, while Nelly's expedient of assuming the costume of the defunct miller only frightens her companion into a very short absence. So there is only one course open to them—viz., to marry, and this they promise to do outright. It would really be refreshing, by-the-by, to find a dramatic work which should have some other conclusion than a promise of marriage. Love-making, though doubtless highly amusing, is, after all, not the sole subject of interest in life. The tridles we have just sketched are described as "drawing-room pieces, intended for private performance," and they are, in some respects, very well calculated for their purpose, being easy of representation and sufficiently attractive to amuse an indulgent audience. Nothing could be better calculated to encourage and stimulate all the musical and artistic talent there may be in a family than the practice necessary for producing a little operetta in fairly efficient style. There is, however, a peculiarity in both these pieces which, although it may enhance their success when they are played publicly by professional singers, will be found a drawback to their introduction into a drawing-room. In one piece the lady has to don the male garments of a miller and in the other the more objectionable costume of a *débardeur*. Strong as their passion for drees may be, there are few young ladies who would venture, or, indeed, who would be allowed to, appear before their friends in such habiliments. "Cousin Kate" has been set by Mr. Meyer Lütz with his usual practical ability. We may notice particularly a duet, "Well, now, really this is charming," as a lively and well-written piece; a song for a lady, entitled, "Leap Year," the words of which are very smart; and two tenor songs, "We cannot always have our lute" and "Cousin Kate is seventeen," both of which will be welcome to amateur vocalists. Still less ambitious is Mr. Mallandaine's music to "The Haunted Mill,"



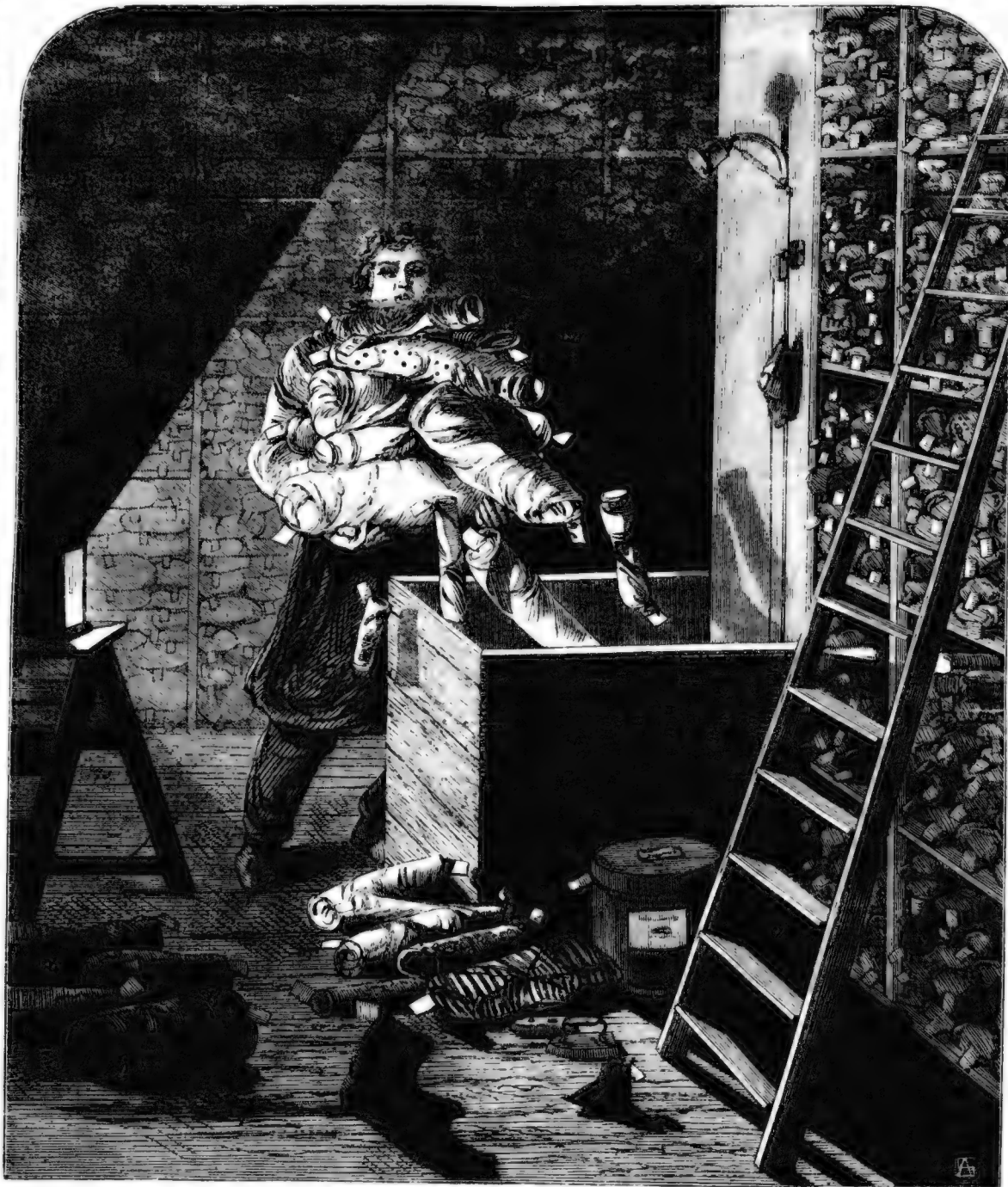
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difficulty, misfortune, and distress come there to find a temporary relief before the dawning of Christmas Day. This ruddy, matronly-looking woman wants her teaspoons and forks and the half-dozen white-handled knives, since she will have company to-morrow; that thin, hollow-cheeked workman, with the dark rings round his eyes, brings the tools which have failed to earn him a Christmas dinner, and leaves them behind him that he may buy food once more. The jaunty young gentleman, who "chaffs" his uncle without show of respect, receives his watch and breastpin for the twentieth time, for he goes home to-morrow by the coach, and would be ashamed to show himself without the maternal gift. Either going in because it is Christmas-time, and wants are many, or coming out because it is Christmas-time, and things must look brighter for at least one day in all the year, even though they drop to their dead level again on "Boxing Day," the pledges of the season change hands over our uncle's counter, and are shaken, examined, rubbed, folded, pinned, tied, indorsed, or docketed with marvellous rapidity by the dexterous assistants. A cursory ramble round the establishment would reveal some curious facts relative to our uncle's business. To say nothing of a coach and horses, a stack of timber, a drove of pigs, and a coffin, all of which have, we understand, been at one time or other amongst the temporary pledges, there is a wonderful tendency of the establishment towards flat-irons, the flat-iron having, as we have reason to believe, a definite standard value to the amount of fourpence; of boots—a long row of which hanging from pegs at the back of the shop have that awfully human appearance (suggestive of their former wearers) which second-hand boots always have—our uncle is generally wary; but in the matter of clothes, especially stays and petticoats, there are bales packed up and groves hanging to hooks ready for delivery.

Many of the men's garments are new, and ultimately find their way to establishments where they are sold as "misfits"—a word which describes them accurately enough, since they are generally remarkable for the qualification of "going on to anybody and fitting nobody."

If all the dead orchestras of all the defunct musical societies



HOW THE PAWNBROKER'S BOY SPENDS HIS CHRISTMAS EVE.

are not represented here, especially in the way of flutes and flageolets, there will be little instrumental music in London this Christmas-tide; they are even more numerous than pistols and walking-sticks, and many of them are as unlikely to leave their present quarters as are the pair of globes which stand in their green-baize covers before the doorway leading up to the rooms above.

It is in these rooms above that the pledges less liable to immediate redemption are stored—plate and jewellery in drawers and closets, clothes and miscellaneous articles on shelves—all arranged on a mnemonic system known only to the initiated. From the top of the house to the bottom a small shaft is cut, up which a bag containing the duplicate is sent from the shop, that the redeemed pledge may be found by its numbered ticket, and sent down by the same means. For this bag it is now more customary to substitute a sort of lift resembling those in use at the eating-houses for conveying dishes from the kitchen.

It was near this lift that we made the acquaintance of the boy represented in our Engraving. He was as uncommunicative a boy as could well be imagined, and he was also a frenzied, dishevelled boy, flushed in his countenance and disordered as to his hair.

These peculiarities were partially explained by the accumulation of articles which lay before him, for some of which demands were being made in an imperative tone by the busy assistants, as the lift slid up and down. In answer to our inquiries, this lad gave us one wild but still comical look of mingled mirth and despair, and cut short further conversation by remarking, "Well, I'm blowed! What next? Why, if here ain't a swell come up the spout now!"

Poor fellow! The warehouse boy is appealed to upon all occasions, but now a very great deal more than is agreeable. Tingle-tingle goes the bell to inform him that more tickets are awaiting his attention. Pouring down a half-score bundles, he hauls up the bag, draws forth the duplicates, and then, lantern in hand, plunges among his racks in search of coats, waistcoats, trousers, boots, kerchiefs, and a whole host of other articles of wearing apparel quite unmentionable in any other atmosphere. Tingle-tingle goes the bell again; and



CHRISTMAS EVE.—UNCLE BIGGS: "THERE, NOW! I'VE LEFT THE GOOSE BEHIND ME IN THE CAR."



CHRISTMAS DAY.—THE CABMAN PROFITS BY THE ACCIDENT.



again the boy pours the burden of his arms in the insatiable throat that is always demanding more. Sometimes an article has slipped behind a rack, or has got otherwise misplaced—cannot, in fact, be found; and then, after a fair search of several minutes, the ticket is laid aside for a more leisure moment, much to the irritation of the unfortunate who is waiting below, and who sees later comers marching triumphantly away with the habiliments in which they are to create a sensation on the morrow. The night may be cold without; snow may lie upon the housetops and choke the roadways; but the pawnbroker's boy feels not the inclement weather. His "gov'nor" has told him that, if he "keeps the pot a-biling" to-night, he shall go out to dinner to-morrow; and the thought of the holiday spurs him on. As he warms to his work, off goes his jacket and up go his shirt sleeves. Cold, indeed! why, he's as hot as a cayenne lozenge! Follow him if you can. Now on his knees, pursuing a flannel petticoat; now up the ladder, in search of a pair of stockings; now in the loft, after a pair of blankets and a bolster; then in the middle of a rack, dragging forth a great-coat or a pair of corded small-clothes. And such is his life on Christmas Eve.

#### THE GREEN OLD AGE OF A LONDON INN.

A MAN who has spent a great part of his life in the City maintains a loving acquaintance with certain old nooks and corners which have not yet been reached by modern innovations. Quite away from ordinary commercial interests, and lying quietly apart from the bustle and traffic of the crowded streets, there are all sorts of quaint places associated in his mind with a score of romances, half true, half imaginary, which are suggested by the queer, dingy, faded mansions, the little dim churches, the blank churchyards (tanks of dead leaves and grass-grown tombs), the sooty trees, and the silent courtyards on which a cool shade rests even at noon in July. Not the least suggestive of all the old by-places in London are those wonderful old City inns which may be discovered here and there, their great yards staring blankly for the coaches which will never come; their wooden galleries, surrounded with bedroom-doors, looking out over the space which would be empty but for a country waggon or two; their coffee-rooms, the resort of men who are here to-day and gone to-morrow, gone not by the brightly-gleaming, fast coach, with its four horses, prancing out under the archway as the stable helper leads them into the street, but by the railway omnibus which meets five trains a day. The British coachman, as he was described by Washington Irving in 1820, would be totally unknown to the younger members of our community but for his lifelike presentation in the pages of "Pickwick," where his appearance and peculiarities are recorded by the hand of the great novelist. In no quarter of London was he better known than at the good old Inn represented in our Engraving; for it stood then, and, indeed, stands still, in the great highway of the metropolis—the main artery of England. We have always been of opinion that a voyager round the globe, who started fair and kept an even course, would ultimately turn up in the Mile-end-road, and so come on towards Aldgate; and it is in the latter place that the Old Bull Inn still stands—if not in its glory, at least in a very green and vigorous condition. Its glory, indeed, may be said to have departed rather less than a score of years ago, when the railways practically superseded the mail coach and the "four spanking tits," on which

our fathers were so eloquent. Before this time "the Bull" was the centre of the coaches running the long journeys on the Norfolk road, besides being the station of a number of those which journeyed to the northern and western towns.



THE LEGEND OF SHADOW-TREE SHAFT: THE FIGHT IN THE BUCKE T.  
SEE SUPPLEMENT, PAGE 403.

It is an unpretentious place enough; not galleried, as some of its contemporaries are, but containing at the end of its long and rather narrow entrance a large space, surrounded by the stables; the inn itself lying on the left, and the various offices on the right of the passage. Yet this modest-looking hostelry was a place of great importance when its square yard resounded with the bustle and excitement of arriving and departing passengers, and the constant succession of green and drab coated, florid men, with a "power of suction" worthy of the elder Mr. Weller, and a decided taste for ale, corned beef, and lukewarm brandy-and-water. It was at Christmas-tide, however, that the Bull, Aldgate, was at its best, when the coaches came in from the country loaded with presents, mostly in the form of poultry, game, and other edibles; but (so many coming from Norfolk) notably of turkeys. Then brisk chambermaids and distracted waiters were at their wits' end to provide for hungry and tired guests; then ostlers and stable helps hissed and curry-combed, and hauled here and unbuckled there, and shouted till the inn yard was in an uproar. And still the coaches came with more parcels, till stables had to be given up to baskets and packages, while the turkeys were piled in stacks or hung from rack and manger, a glorious sight to see.

Nearly six hundred horses were employed by the present host of the Bull to supply some of the stages for his coaches in various parts of the country. Of all those six hundred not six remain; for the railways came, and, skirting the great highway without stopping at the old resting-place, left the vehicles to drop off the road, and the ruddy, shawl-wrapped coachmen to disappear as they might, their occupation and their characteristics to die out for ever. The old inn stands there yet, however, accommodating itself as it best can to its altered circumstances, and blossoming in a quiet and a green old age. It is true that its entrance is placarded, not with the bills announcing the times of departure of fast coaches, but with railway time-bills and the notices of special trains; but there are still horses baiting in its spacious stables, the whipmaker on the right-hand side of the entrance still shows a goodly stock in his low window, the booking-office is bright with the glow of gas, and there is still evidence of what was once the harness-room. Only a few waggons, carts, and chaises visit the yard; and some of the former are but railway-waggons calling there for parcels; but in the old coffee-room the fire yet burns brightly, its ruddy glow reflected in the bright mahogany tables, while in the "boxes" snug parties of old stagers, who know a good old inn when they see one, are gathered for confidential talk. About the bar there is still the queer agglomeration of little rooms, each going either up or down a shallow step; and waiters and chambermaids are still there, prepared for any emergency, even (were it possible) for the abolition of railways.

But for the latter (the chambermaids, we mean), it might be said that everything was old and staid; but gallantry forbids us to record any such conclusion.

Whatever may have departed from the old inn, however, its comfort and its homely hospitality seem to be unimpaired—its old cellars still yield some of the good old wine; and the host, one of an old family who have been associated with many of the most celebrated of old London hostleries, is too genial to resent the changes which time has wrought; and so lives, like the inn itself, with the prospect of a green and sound old age.



THE BULL INN, ALDGATE, ON CHRISTMAS EVE, IN THE OLD COACHING DAYS.



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SATURDAY, DECEMBER 19, 1863.

**A CHRISTMAS PARTY MINUS THE "MYSTIC INFLUENCE."**

My name is Job Blunt. Probably you have heard of me before; if so, you are aware that I am not a sentimental man, nor an admirer of veneer, and stucco, and french-polish. They hide the true grain and breed speculation, and speculation, to me, is detestable. "Downright" is my motto, and I am entitled to it, for I ask no more than I offer. I am as plain as an oaken post, and as rough and as tough, and I hope I may say as stanch. I'm not ashamed of the nakedness of my hand, and I wouldn't wear gloves if I was worth a thousand a year. I can find my way about without the aid of spectacles, and am quite content to follow my nose. It is a sound, homely, sagacious organ, and though, at present, it has not scented out the way to Tom Tiddler's ground, it has warned me of several paths promising enough to look at, but which turned out "no thoroughfare," being barred at the further end by a work-house door.

I never take anything "for granted." If I don't see the way clear before me, I halt till some one is kind enough to show me a light. If a man doesn't understand a thing he had better say so, and lay his case open to enlightenment.

Christmas is one of the things which I don't understand a bit. Don't misunderstand me. Why it should be a season of Christian rejoicing is as plain to me as to any other poor mortal, with a soul to save; but either I am a dull, unemotional block-head, or some people are dreadful hypocrites in their observance of it. There's that old Jobbling. I am a poor man, and live in a poor neighbourhood, and Jobbling



keeps a porkshop round the corner. Jobbling had a goose club last year, and, passing his shop early on Christmas Eve, I saw the porkman at high words with a poor woman, who had only paid up half her subscription-money, and who begged that she might have out the four shillings she had paid in bacon, that being, she declared, her only prospect of meat for her Christmas dinner. Jobbling would not let her have it; he referred her to the rules of the club, and fiercely told her that if she stayed there kicking up a row he would lock her up. Yet at church-time on Christmas morning I met Jobbling, looking as sleek, and as meek, and as sanctimonious as though Peace and Good-will, in their search for worthy vessels, had lit on the porkman and filled him to the brim. Or, as though He whose birthday was celebrated just a year ago had died yesterday, and the new Prince, born when midnight had tolled and the merry bells began to peal, was too young to know anything of Mr. Jobbling's sinful ways of the past and many a previous year, enabling him to pass as a proper man if he only stuck well to his mask; that is, if it is a mask, and I am not a heathen. But, for that matter, I have observed the same behaviour in a dozen other men besides Mr. Jobbling. One would think that they held their lives on lease from year to year, from Christmas to Christmas, and that the only way of gaining a renewal of the lease was by a display of much humility and contrition, and shaking of hands, and charitable thoughts of distant enemies on the twenty-fifth of December. The next day, the new leaseholder steps into the world of weights and measures and chops and changes with less of the whites of his

**UNDER AND OVER THE MISTLETOE**





eyes apparent than was the case yesterday, and with the corners of his mouth at their accustomed angles. For a whole year the lease is stowed away forgotten, buried; and this may be the reason why the day following Christmas Day is so much more cheerful.

After all, however, and admitting that the Christmas morning is that of a man, whether he or they who made him, so much more cheerful than they? Who are responsible for the "mystic influence" of the season? The story-writers: the literary gentlemen who, regularly, in December sets in, take to satanizing every journal and magazine in the three kingdoms with mystery, and superstition, and all manner of unearthliness, a mere snuff at which, to weak minds, is as potent as chloroform. I've no objection to the writer of fiction; indeed, I can enjoy as well as any man a crisp, startling, rattling tale of adventure; but the stories of your Christmas writers are seldom or ever of this sort. They are artfully written, as though they were either the personal experiences of the writer, or confined to him by one who never would have divulged the tragic business that he had a hand in only for the "mystic influence" of the season. The writer's aim is, not to amuse his reader, but to make him shudder—to give him the creeps; he cleverly insinuates "Who knows?" in the matters of churchyard warnings and visitations from disembodied spirits; it is his delight to make timid people afraid of shadows, and to mistrust the comfortable fire because of the "faces" that haunt it.

So far, I can only say that I believe the Christmas-story writer to be an impostor. I can't say for certain. There may be bones in the fire; the frost on the windows may take more fantastic shapes on Christmas morning than on any other; there may be such things as ghosts. When I see 'em I'll believe in 'em. Perhaps it is only people that are more F. than R. who have the privilege of seeing such things, and of writing about them after the fashion of 'em. If so, the Christmas-story writer is not so blundering a person as if he were more R. than F. I don't understand it; so will let this part of the subject drop.

What I do understand is what the Christmas-story writer has got to say about Christmas parties. In this matter I have no hesitation in saying that he is either a very ignorant person or a—well, I want a milder expression that will convey my meaning—a deliberate falsifier. I've seen three-and-twenty married Christmas-parties to say nothing of the six and twenty single ones passed down home; and I am bound to say that if the whole number could be squeezed in a press they would not yield a quarter as much sentiment, and romance, and pathetic incident—all due to the "mystic influence" of the season—as may be found in any one of the fifty dozen Christmas stories to be bought to-day at the publisher's shop. My name is Job Blunt; and, at the risk of being considered rude, I'm bound to express my opinion that the Christmas parties mentioned in Christmas stories are never met out of 'em; they're all bladders.

I believe I'm entitled to this opinion on all sorts of grounds. I flatter myself that I am not less wide awake than most people, and that if any member of any Christmas circle of which I have made one had been seized with pathos, or sentiment, or anything of that kind, it would not have escaped me. For that matter, why should not I feel the "mystic influence" at Christmas time, since it's so much about? I'm ready! I'm not like an affected milkmaid who would shrink from it. Let it fall on me, or over me, or whatever it is, and when I feel it I'll up and say so like a man.

If not on me, why not on my family circle? It's a circle of the regular Christmas-story sort. Boys and girls, they continue; and when they stand in a row the gradual descent from Thomas, who is a porter at a millinery establishment, to little Jess, the youngest, is very suggestive of a flight of stairs, which I believe is very often the case with Christmas-story family circles. My wife is a plump woman enough, and little, since the Christmas-story writers like plump little mothers of large families; and she has merry, brown eyes, which, as is known, they are likewise partial to. My father is an old man, with thin white hair, and a bone back, and a crutch stick (it is one of the oldest sticks you ever saw; made out of the ironwood paddles of a South Sea Islander's canoe, and carved from top to bottom with ships and whales, and pictures of emerald customs; my father has been a seafaring man); he's a good-tempered old chap; and the young ones, when they know he is expected, are as pleased as punch. He always spends Christmas with us. Then I've got an uncle a soldier, with a wooden leg, and a silver plate in his skull, both earned fighting in the China war; and a nephew a midshipman in Green's service; and another nephew a warder at one of the London prisons. I could go on and list a goodish while; but it isn't worth while, my only object being to show that the Christmas circle gathered in our parlour is one in which the "mystic influence," if it exists, might not unreasonably be expected.

Anyhow, we are jolly enough with 'em. When a man asks me to a party, I make up my mind to enjoy myself; and that nothing on his part will be wanting to make me comfortable. I abide by the same rule. My Christmas guests may depend on good meat and good liquor, and as big a fire as they please. They'll find a piece of holly in the pudding and a bunch of mistletoe hanging from the centre of the ceiling. They'll find my son Tom, who, if they are inclined to singing, can accompany any of them upon the flute. If they are smokers, they'll find a good supply of the best birdseye and some straw pipes. But what they won't find, as I said before, unless they bring it with them, is the "mystic influence."

"It is there, nevertheless," Mr. Jobbling would probably say. "You ignorant man, it has not a corporeal existence; you can't catch hold of it; it's as subtle as air; it's air; your house is full of it; you breathe it and are full of it, you and all your family. Jolly enough? of course you are. It is the mystic influence that makes you jolly, and free of heart, and hand, and speech; it's that which gives a delicious flavour to the sirlin and that indescribable odour to the big plum-pudding, and adds hops to the ale, and sets the fire roaring and crackling. What would the old stories and the old songs be without the mystic influence? What but it links the members of your merry-making circle so lovingly, and brightens dull eyes, and sharpens dull memories, and makes you speak and act as you only can this once a year?"

Speaking from the Christmas-story-book, this is pretty much what Jobbling would say. He might add, "Now, you take particular notice, next Christmas, of your own feelings towards other folks, and of their behaviour towards yourself; and afterwards tell me whether what I have said on the subject is right or wrong."

It is done already, Mr. Jobbling. I did take particular notice on the last Christmas that happened, and have much pleasure in presenting you with the result.

Besides my father and uncle Haddock—he of the silver plate and the wooden leg before mentioned—there were invited the prison warder and his young woman, and my nephew in Green's service, and a shopmate of mine from the docks (I am a cooper, you will please to understand), and his wife and their daughter Rebecca, who, my wife will have it (it makes me laugh!) is sweet on our Tom. Right, without our own flock, are as many as I can find table-room for. Bear in mind I have nothing to do with choosing the guests. With the exception of father and uncle Haddock, my wife invited every one. Since I wanted to put the mystic business to the test, I was glad that it came about so.

If any one imagines that I was prejudiced, he is mistaken. "A fair field and no favour" is my constant maxim, and I didn't desert from it on this occasion. Between eleven and twelve I went to bed, quite calm and easy in mind, and prepared to follow the humdrum of morning, the Christmas morning, brought one. But it happened that I was not to wait till the morning for my first observation on the mystic-influence question; about twelve o'clock there came some music close at hand. I don't know what else there was, but I could make out a cornet, and a flute, and a concertina. It was the "waits." Now, everybody knows how beautifully the Christmas-story writers write about the waits, and their music. The musicians were just far enough away to make the performance pleasant and soothing to any one pleasantly asleep. I could make it out to be "The Last Rose of Summer," they were playing, and they played it so nicely that I was

sorry when they had finished. They struck up again, however, and this time it was "The Light of other Days." Mrs. Blunt used to be this when we were coming, and I was always pleased to hear it. I don't know if I am bound to say that when I heard the waits playing in the old time, it set me thinking of the old days. I don't know, I am equally bound to say that it always set me thinking of the old days. I don't know if I am bound to say that it always set me thinking of the old days. I don't know, I am equally bound to say that it always set me thinking of the old days.

"Hear the waits, dear," said I. "Yes." "Hush! How can I listen while you are talking?" This made me open my eyes. She had been asleep, and I had been talking. I don't know if I am bound to say that when I heard the waits playing in the old time, it set me thinking of the old days. I don't know, I am equally bound to say that it always set me thinking of the old days.

"There!" said she; "that's where he's out!" "Where who's out, Sarah?" "That flute-player," replied she; "I've got no peace with the new-fangled twists they put into tunes in these days. Our Tom plays tunes better than that stuff!" And with that she settled down on the pillow, and in a minute or two began to breathe in a way that convinced me she was fast asleep.

Next morning Tom awoke at last, he woke his mother by knocking at the door, and she woke me by calling out, "What do you want, Tom?"

"These precious boots," replied Tom; "I can't get 'em on. I've been trying this half hour. Dash the boots!" and Tom, whose foot, I suppose, was half in one of the boots (thought new on the previous evening), gave such a violent kick against the flirring of the wall that you might have heard it next door.

Tom had got up early, as he had promised to be at Rebecca's place at Rotherhithe to breakfast, and then they were all to come back to dinner together. It wasn't more than six o'clock, and pitch dark. Tom's boots were in this way put me out a bit.

"Sarah, Sarah," said I; "you should be a little less dandified, and a little less fussy about your boots."

"So they did fit me when I tried 'em on," replied Tom, saucily; "so they would now, if my stockings were like those of yore's, and not of yore's and sunny as these are!"

"Dandified and sunny! you false-spoken boy, you!"

But there, we went no further into the matter, Tom's boots and my stockings being perfectly private matters, and of no sort of interest to either of us. I don't know if I should have mentioned them, or not, but I don't know. I don't know if I should have mentioned them, or not, but I don't know. I don't know if I should have mentioned them, or not, but I don't know. I don't know if I should have mentioned them, or not, but I don't know.

So much for my first observation on Christmas morning. There was nothing particularly noteworthy about the breakfast, except that the youngsters were allowed steak and eggs and mackerel. After that, the youngsters went to Sunday school, just as they do on Sundays, and the two girls helped to clear up and cook, like a good girl as they do on Sundays, the only difference being that there was more than common occasion to put the pieces to rights, and consequently more work to do, which I had a hand in by touching up the picture-frames a bit and giving the chimney-glass a polish. I tied up the mistletoe, and, being not quite sure about its being in the centre, called up the missus (she has got a wonderfully true eye) to have a look. I didn't tell her what I wanted her for, and when she came in at the door and saw, she for an instant looked a little cross; but then she laughed and said,

"Lord! the idea of your bringing me here to look at a bit of such nonsense. What an old stupid you are!"

So'll I look out for the first time when she reads this that she is a thought never entered my head till she was there. "You see the goose that all over your black satin waistcoat if you don't mind," said she; and so I did, and the run being on the sideboard, we each had a little drop.

That was about all that happened out of the general way till the old gentleman came. Grandfather, white-haired old grandfather, with his pockets crammed with toys for the youngsters, is almost as great a favourite as the waits with the Christmas-story writer. The father of the family in the Christmas story usually gives the old man a welcome in the passage, or at the gate even, the children swarming over him, and packing his pockets, and crushing his hat, and welching strangling him out of gratitude. I know that, however powerful the mystic influence might be, there was small chance of this happening; my father being a man very suspicious of fuss. Besides, the children had not yet returned from Sunday school. The missus opened the door for him, both the eldest girls greeting him in the passage.

"Here you are, then, grandfather! Why, how well you are looking!"

"Yes, thank God! and I'm feeling well, except from my old complaint—you know. I wish you a merry Christmas, my lass; and out to my dears. Where's Job?"

"Here he is. When you've done kiss 'em, he'll come up, father."

"How are you, my boy? How do you look?"

"Oh yes; she's all right, I believe. How precious cold your hands are, father!"

"Cold! Blessed if I don't feel like a mouthful of frost-bite. Outside that precious Camden-town bus, Job—crawl, crawl! It was as much as I could do to keep from sweating. Thanks. Well, here's health and prosperity to us all! That's as tidy a drop of rum, Job, as I've tasted since I left the service."

Then we had a little to say about hot Christmases and cold Christmases; and then he went back to the subject of his cold ride on the omnibus; and from that we got to talking about railways, and of steam-boats, and of steam-runs, and of the war in America—just exactly as we should had it been Easter Monday, or Good Friday, or the most ordinary Tuesday or Wednesday. It was easy to see the mystic influence had not got over my father. "The North can't do it, Sir," said he, bringing his fist down with a bang, as was his way when he argued about war. "The South will lick 'em into him. Sir; they might have done it months ago but for their ladylike generosity and sparing this, that, and the other, instead of putting it to the sword. They should 'now as they go,' Sir, as they did when I was a fighting man. That's the way to put a quick finish to a fight, my lad! Why, look at that time when our little squadron was hammer and tongs with the Malayan pirates! 'Now as you go' was our motto there, Sir, and—"

So the fierce old man-o'-war's man went on; about as peaceful and charitable as a mastiff. He kept it going till Uncle Haddock, and Joe Haddock, the warder; and Rebecca, his young woman; and Mr. and Mrs. Cole, from Rotherhithe; along with their daughter Rebecca and my Tom (his feet having settled into the boots, he was all right now) arrived, and the dinner was ready.

It certainly was a capital dinner. As a dinner as I ever sat down to. It the mystic influence had anything to do with it, I'm sure I am very much obliged to it; but at the same time, it is only fair to state that it ought to have been a good dinner. Tenpence-halfpenny is a long price to give for ribs or beef; and when a man has sixteen children for a goose he can hardly expect to get a bad dinner.

Besides, my missus is a cook—a good cook, you understand. I was getting her seven pounds a year and period when I was a boy; so I think I may make bold to say that the mystic influence wouldn't be able to put her up to much in preparing a dinner. It was a nice dinner; everybody said so. Everybody looked so hearty and happy that it seemed quite a pity to take the dinner away.

The Christmas-story writer seldom has anything to say about the

afternoon (it's all women's talk that there is no afternoon between a poor man's Christmas dinner-time and his tea-time; his dinner time and his tea time are put in it, and it's all women's talk). I don't know if I am bound to say that when I heard the waits playing in the old time, it set me thinking of the old days. I don't know, I am equally bound to say that it always set me thinking of the old days.

Now comes the crowning time. The small fry are put to bed (they only get disagreeable and lie about, making pillows of people's new trousers and silk frocks, if you are foolish enough to allow them to sit up), the candles lit, the fire stirred, the chairs set round, and the grog made. Here we are, then; this is the Christmas circle exactly as the Christmas-story writer pictures it, with the exception that a jolly big lump of wallsend coal does duty for the Christmas log, which is a smoky, ill-looking contrivance, and I believe burnt more frequently in stories than in fire-grates, and that the grog is not in a bowl, but in tumblers. What near there's Mrs. Cole and my missus talking in half-whispers about the remarkable manner in which little Charley Cole is cutting his can't teeth; there is Bill Cole and my nephew, the warder, talking about picking oakum and caulking; uncle Haddock is twisting his pipe, and explaining to father and myself how that he doesn't drink because of the silver plate in his skull; while Joe Perkins, Elizabeth, and my eldest girls are giggling together, and observing my Tom and Rebecca looking so lachrymose, and holding hands as though any one wanted to part 'em. Presently Tom discovers the giggles, and wants to know if somebody is going to sing.

Then singing commences. Mrs. Cole sings "The Hushing White Serpent," followed by that merry little old song, "When I lived in my grandmother's cot," by my missus; and then "The Wolf," by Joe Perkins, because Elizabeth asked for it. I don't sing; no more does uncle Haddock; but my old father does—good old sea songs. Hoising them—"Harry Hawser," and "The Death of Nelson," and "Hearts of Oak"—with surprising activity for so old a man getting on his legs and describing the position of the enemy and the various incidents and catastrophes with his crutch-stick, and with such energy that after each song the family circle found itself a good deal spread out, and had to close up again before the next song commenced. He floundered Tom, and his mother, too, a little, I think. Tom kindly thought to assist his grandfather with his music; and when the old gentleman, with a stamp of his foot, roared out "Was in Trafalgar's Bay," Tom began to tootle-tootle on the flute. The old boy stopped at once. "That it, Tom," said he, "if you don't understand the song, don't make a mock of it. It was a battle fought with cannon, my boy—cannon! not with peashooters! But that rascal squeaker do!" It was with the greatest difficulty in the world that Tom could be prevailed on, after that, to sing "The Young Man from the Country," though he had had the song book containing it as long back as October; but when at last he did, father was good-natured enough to heal the wound he had caused Tom, by joining in the chorus to his stupid song.

When we had had enough of singing, somebody asked somebody else the last new conundrum; but, as everybody knew, it was very soon answered. After a few old riddles, in the last one of which some reference was made to a strait waistcoat, Joe Perkins told me a story about a fighting man who was confined in the prison infirmary with delirium tremens, and the dreadful work they had with him. After that, we ceased for a while to be a circle, and engaged in pains and pieces—Joe Perkins with Elizabeth, Tom with Rebecca, Mrs. Cole and my missus, whispering, laughing, and joking, while Cole and I talked about the docks, and the old soldier and sailor about their pensions—all perfectly comfortable and jolly. Then a game at cards was proposed, and one and all engaged in a round and cheerful game at speculation, which lasted till supper-time, which ended the party. As a merry party, as one that gave perfect satisfaction to all concerned in it, I'll back it against any in the land; but hang me if I could find anything of "mystic influence" in it from first to last.

JAMES GREENWOOD.

## THE POET'S CHRISTMAS RETROSPECT.

A SONG OF PILGRIMAGE.

SINCE we twain were one, my own true wife,  
No harbourage have we known from strife,  
But chequered has been our lot in life  
With many a sob and sorrow;  
Hosanna to God did we ever raise,  
And thanked Him for all his yesterdays,  
And the good He would send to-morrow.

Our lot has not been a balmy sigh,  
On fluttering wing borne up the sky;  
We never might dance on roses lie,  
Like Measure's pale, spangled minions;  
Our home was never an ark of rest,  
The Deluge-dew is our emblem bust,  
On its wet and weary pinions.

Deep was the love that King Edward bore,  
When a cross he raised, in days of yore,  
Where rested the corpse of Measure;  
Oh! there would be several crosses;  
If one were raised to each dear-loved child,  
That died on our pilgrimage so wild,  
And now sleeps under the mosses.

Though honey-mouthed friends away had fled,  
As each little babe in its shroud lay dead,  
And our bitter tears were in secret shed,  
Pure love's golden links never rusted;  
In trouble they bound us but tighter and truer,  
The anchor that held them was faithful and sure,  
For only in God have we trusted.

A legend there is in history told  
Of a miser who loved more than life his gold,  
But his daughter's heart, of angel mould,  
Was full of the tenderest pity.  
A basket of bread on her arm she bore,  
And forth she went to the hungry poor,  
For famine stalked over the city.

At the garden-gate she met her sire,  
"What hast thou there?" he asked, with fire,  
"Tosses," she answered, to soothe his ire.  
And then he said, "Show me the posies;"  
And, lo! the bread-leaves were roses red!  
She went on her way, and to leaves of bread  
Again God had changed the roses!

And, oh! when Terrors have barr'd our way,  
And briars and thorns on our pathway lay,  
God's hand has removed them day by day.  
The brambles with flowers adorning;  
For oft and oft these sorrowing years  
We have gone to rest in anguish and tears,  
And joy has come in the morning!

One by one have life's blossoms decayed,  
Still we are voyaging sore afraid,  
Calm as the twilight dim-fading shade  
Creep over us silence and sorrow;  
But Love's soft star on the breast of Eve,  
Pute, smiling, whispers, "Oh, cease to grieve,  
And ever trust God for to-morrow!"

SHELDON CHADWICK.







conically-shaped cavern formed. He gave the signal, and was lowered further.

His foot touched something. He bent his head, so as to bring the light of the lamp in his hat to bear upon the obstruction, and found that it was wood—good, firm, thick planks. Treading cautiously, and never relaxing a firm grasp of his only communication with the upper world, he searched the damp walls of the singular tomb. His light fell upon a human form in a corner! A second glance showed the earth-diver the bruised and wasted features of John Prow.

In a moment Jenny slung the senseless form in the spare rope.

Then, clutching the inanimate body close in his embrace, gave the signal, and was hoisted upwards.

A shout burst from the men on the mound as the two forms emerged from the crater, and Jenny threw herself beside John Prow on the trodden snow.

A month after, partially recovered, thanks to a sound constitution and the affectionate solicitude of Jenny, John gave an account of his entombment.

"I'd no sooner got to the top of the mound than something cracked beneath my feet and I fell through. I caught at a board with my left hand, to save myself, but it was so rotten that it did

not bear my weight a second. I closed my eyes and thought a prayer. I knew that I was doomed, and that I should be dead long before I had done falling—falling to the bottom of that fearful shaft. I had no sooner made up my mind to die than my fall was stopped by the flooring. I struck a lucifer—I always carry them for pipe-lighting—and looked about me. I lit a piece of paper and threw it from me, and saw that over the mouth of the pit a flooring had been laid, perhaps for the purpose of raising some machinery. By this time my leg began to be very painful, and I thought that before I fainted from loss of blood it was best to shout as loudly as I could. I lit another lucifer and looked at my watch; it was eighteen



A BEAU OF THE OLDEN TIME DRESSING FOR THE CHRISTMAS DINNER.

minutes past two. I wound up my watch and shouted as loud as I could, and grew frightened with the sound of my own voice. After that, what happened for some time I don't know—I suppose I fainted. When I came to myself I found myself lying upon my side. Something hurt me. I dragged myself up and found it was a small flat bottle, full of spirits."

"Why, John, that must have been the little bottle I slipped into your pocket unbeknown to you that night," said Jane.

"Then, my dear, you saved my life, for without it I should have perished. I looked up and saw the bright blue sky shining through the broken boards. I shouted again, drank, and shouted again till I sank, fairly exhausted. The next time I woke I was very faint; it was just four o'clock; the bottle was emptied. I had but eight lucifers left—enough to last my time, I thought. And then I think

I turned delirious; for I dreamt you came to me, Jane, and that I heard the wedding bells, and how I cursed myself for not being on earth with you; and then I thought the boards cracked beneath me, and I fell down, down, down, and still kept falling, and never stopped in my awful, anxious, sickening descent for years and years. I went turning, turning, turning, in one unfathomable depth, with my head downwards; and I remember thinking that this was the eternity of punishment I had heard of; after that, I remember no more."

"But what did you go up at all for, dear?" asked Jane.

"Because I heard a noise in the Coppie or from the shaft, and I thought some one was trying to frighten me."

"Was that two nights afore Christmas Day?" broke in the red-shirted Australian.

"Ay."

"About half-past one in the morning?"

"Ay."

"Why, that was me and Jenny!"

"What?"

"We was coo-eying."

"Coo-eying?"

"Ay—voice-throwing. We learnt it in Australy from the natives, who call to each other miles off. Me and Jenny met that night,

"Oh, John!" remonstrated Jane.

accidental, on t'other side of the Coppie; so I asked him if he'd forgot how to coo-ey; and he coo-eyed, and then I coo-eyed, and then he coo-eyed again."

"That explains it," said John; "and I think I can explain the ghost story."





THE ROBINS.



"Yes."

"On the hill at the back of the closed shaft a copious of snow-tipped fir-branches; and as the wind stirred their tops and shaken their whitened fringes gave that odd association of human heads and arms inseparable from a clump of those picturesque, mournful, skeleton trees."

"A murder was done there some years ago, and the murderer drank himself into delirium tremens and thought he saw ghosts. It no longer pays the owners to work the mine, and so they close it. It is a wild-looking spot, and, as children might be lost in the Coppie, a report is spread of ghosts, to scare them away."

"The moon flings the shadows of the firs on the mouth of the shaft, and when the wind shakes them the shadows look as if they were fighting. As for the female figure in white, that is the snow itself, for it only is seen in winter, and, as the snow must be between the shadows, it naturally intercepts the fighting."

"And the groans?"

"Oh, the wind moaning through the firs!"

"But, now, John," said Jane, "why was it I dreamt that you'd fallen down the shaft? Explain that!"

"Because—because—you're a woman."

"Oh, John, what do you believe?"

"That we shall be married the week after next."

And they were; and on that occasion Mrs. Drin remarked with her fingers to Jimmy that she considered the law forbidding the marriage of a lone widow with a deceased husband's brother a scandal and a shame.

Since that day Jimmy has not been heard of. It is believed that he fled to other lands in company with the red-shirted man from Australia.

The disconsolate Mrs. Drin still weeps for him.

T. W. ROBERTSON.

## DRESSING FOR DINNER: A PEEP BEHIND THE SCENES.

If nobody is a hero to his valet, what deep humiliation awaits the painstaking beau, whose toilet mysteries are exposed to the wicked, laughing eyes of critical feminine friends. With what half-concealed wrath will his small artillery of charms be regarded as he plays them off at the dinner-table, unconscious that the operations by which they have been developed are revealed! Who could really bear to have their little toilet rites exposed to mocking criticism? Could the critics themselves? No. It is one of the most painful evidences of the cruelty of human nature that the universal weaknesses are also the subjects of universal satire.

Everybody is continually finding everybody else out, and, at the same time, affecting to believe that they alone are undiscovered.

"All men (and notably all women) think all men (and women) mortal but themselves; and they often use their pretended superiority in making themselves hateful. After all, this peep behind the scenes is evidently but a little feminine revenge for unbearable ains and offensive conceit; and Master Jay will assuredly feel a few tugs at his peacock's plumes before the Christmas dinner is ended and the old ale drunk out. His misfortunes should make him a wiser and a better man. Then he may have more regard from his fair friends, and be independent at once of them and of the perfumer."

## THE CHILDREN'S EARLY QUESTS.

Of all the birds in England the robin is surely the national favourite. There is something so essentially British in the affectionate boldness of his nature, in his saucy love of freedom, in his pluck and endurance under trying circumstances which only serve to develop his jovial spirit. If all our most popular historical characters had been born birds, they would have been robins, with scarcely an exception; and our nursery and ballad literature is so filled with the name, that the advent of the little red-waistcoated visitor, as they chirp on the frozen window-sill, and tap confidently against the pane, is an omen of good fortune. To children the robin is especially welcome, and that is a happy Christmas well begun on which he comes to claim their hospitality in the bright, clear morning. He has been their confidential friend ever since that tender act of himself and his fellows when they covered the two babes with leaves as they lay asleep in the wood; for this, if for no other reason, the choicest crumbs should be his; and an aromatic seed or two may well be added, to comfort those poor little red breasts in the midst of the Christmas cold.

## BOTH BEHEADED: BOTH INNOCENT.

PROLOGUE. ON CHRISTMAS EVE.

AND so you stand up for the law, do you?—the sentiment of Shylock—on Christmas Eve! May you stand, Sir, till you drop—your scales and the knife with which you were making ready to cut that impossible pound of flesh!

"Impossible! Why impossible?"

"Because life is vascular in every inch of it. It bleeds at the least incision, cut who may. And how can you make sure you have got only your exact pound?"

"We cannot make sure: we must act for the best: we must go by general rules: we may often punish too much, or punish too little, or punish the comparatively innocent, while the comparatively guilty escape; but that must pass. The law must be upheld."

Very good. But what is this, if not a confession that your highest symbol of Right—namely, the infliction of what you call justice, involves a certain amount of Wrong?

"I admit it; it is a necessary evil."

You must admit it; I knew that. But see, then, what follows:—Let the number 100 represent your moral estimate of a given offence. Then let 100 represent (as, of course, it would) the fair punishment for the offence, including full-blown intention and full-blown performance. You then make your general rule—a law of the State, or a custom of society. It can only deal with the outside of things, because it must be something definite and tangible. So that you find it (inevitably, you say) covering cases where neither the act nor the intent is full-blown. Now, suppose you get hold of X, whose lot at criminality, under the category to which your general rule belongs, is represented by (say) 30. There is Z, round the corner, breaking your rule in the dark, to the whole extent of your full-blown 100. You do not catch Z; you do catch X, and lay on your 100 penalty—counting it a less evil to do this than to break your rule.

"Certainly. I stand for law."

You said so before. So did Shylock, as I said before. But please to note this:—There is a law above you, against which you yourself have sinned in punishing X. And your turn will come for punishment, remember that. If X did wrong 30, and you punish him 100, you committed a fresh crime, you see!

"But I was forced to punish X—forced by the law."

Be it so. The law above the law will be forced to punish you—that's all! My friend, I stand for—

"What on earth do you stand for?"

I STAND FOR LAW—the Law of Sacrifice—the Law of Vicarious Life—which you may know better if I give it another name."

"What name?"

The Doctrine of — the Symbol which is to-morrow uplifted all over Christendom. I stand for law, I say, in the name of the day which is about to dawn. It is my privilege and pride to do so; for I am a Christmas child. And I know that, whereas my law is all-embracing, yours is not!

## I.

The good people of Nuremberg stood for law. But none the less did people in Nuremberg fall sometimes into critical places in which the only appeal was to mercy—mercy of each other, mercy of Almighty, all-bountiful God. I assure you, people sometimes fell sick and helpless in Nuremberg; ah! and sometimes they even died. I have my mind's eye, at this very moment, upon a case in point.

This poor old Martin, a decent citizen, has been bedridden for three years, during which long time his business has gone to wrack; his savings have been partly dissipated, and his daughter Maria, an only child, has been his very affectionate and reverential nurse. All his life has Martin, the craftsman, been more or less paralytic; nearly all her life has Maria, daughter of Martin, the craftsman, been a nurse; for her mother died the day of the child's birth. She was now seventeen.

It thus happened that Maria led a quiet, retired life, seeing very little of the dark side of the thing which is called human nature, and thinking (when she did think) of crime with a distant horror, the like of which is felt by the children in many a Puritan home in this land of our own. Such talk as she had with her father was of the duties of this life and the rewards of the next, and her own chief employment was doing kind things. Many people who see this story will be able to form to themselves an idea of the prevailing mood of this maiden's mind; but, after all, the greater number, even of pure-minded women, will fail to realise it to themselves. Maria scarcely saw anybody belonging to "society," except Hannah, a poor soldier's wife, who used to come and do charring for the little household.

Here, you say, surely here is a creature who can never come into collision with the law—a creature whom the law can never harm. The noisy, entangled machinery of the great, rough, busy world without is not likely ever to trip up this child. And as for the law—why, what on earth can she do that is wrong? The laws are made for the protection of innocence like hers; and social custom follows in the track of the laws, seeking the same end.

My good Sir, allow me, in the language of Mr. Carlyle, to request you, of all things, to clear your mind of Cant. Don't you know that there is such a thing as martyrdom?

"There used to be martyrs. But they are out of date now—they are not wanted any more than miracles."

Oh, you simple man! The whole business of the moral world is carried on by a comprehensive system of martyrdom. And, unless the defects of the law were from time to time thrown up into relief by people who, through the law, suffer for goodness, there would soon be no law left by which to make people suffer for badness. 'The blood of the Christian martyrs was the seed of the Church.' The blood of social martyrs is the manure of social order.

Permit me, then, to prognosticate the worst for Maria. It strikes me that the poor girl will come into collision with the law; and if she should, it will be her goodness, and not her badness, that will be her destruction. A worse person would come off a great deal better.

At all events, the father of this maiden died, and left her alone in the world. Her only relatives were in Lower Saxony, and they were utterly unknown to her. But she was not, as she believed, unprotected. Her father had left behind him property enough to give her time to look about her. In any case, she had an heroic heart and her father's blessing to start with. His last fervent prayer had been for her welfare and her innocence. And so he died.

## II.

The good people of Nuremberg stood for law. Why not? Laws were made to protect the innocent from the assaults of the wicked. This maiden had never thought of law in any other light than that of something grave, and terrible, that had whips, and walls, and the swift, bright axe for evil-doers. Thus, one of the lessons of this very festival of Christmas had never been brought home to Maria; and, being a bad thinker though a good nurse, she had not drawn out the lesson by an inference from the story of the day. "We have a law!" cried the people—not fools, not riff-raff, not bad people, they; but the learning, the wisdom, the morality, the piety, the very best society of the city—"We have a law!" said they, and so they slew—not Barabbas, the malefactor, but Another. Maria did not think about this. She believed in the law as she believed in Heaven. So that when, while the bell was yet tolling for her father, on the day of the funeral, she saw the officers of the law coming in at the door, she welcomed, in her heart, these grave, respectable men, who looked so wise and so good, and stood for Justice itself in her poor little mind. We shall see.

The citizens of Nuremberg were obliged to make oath that the sums which they paid, in the shape of taxes, into the exchequer of the city bore a "just" proportion, according to law, to the amount of their property. Upon the death of a citizen the officers of the exchequer had a right to inspect his books and effects, and upon that errand the law was bent when it sent its highly respectable officers to Maria's door this day. It was the usual course of things—highly proper; the law must be upheld. So the grave gentlemen packed off Maria into a garret while they conducted their scrutiny of the books and the property. She obeyed like a child. The grave, good gentlemen made their extracts from the books of the dead Martin, selected a trade voucher here and there, placed the great seal of the ever-glorious exchequer of Nuremberg upon here a lock, and there a lock, and departed—for the present. A few days afterwards, however, they made a second descent upon the premises, and told Maria, with much regret, of course, that the law must be upheld—that she had to turn out. By mistake, or by design, her father had "defrauded" the State, and the consequence was that all he had left behind him was forfeited to the ever-glorious exchequer of Nuremberg.

Now, what can be fairer than a law that each person should contribute to the general purse of the State which protects him? Such a law must be upheld. It was upheld; and this child of seventeen was pitched into the streets without a stiver in her own pocket, and a moral nature as much bewildered as if a voice from the clouds had told her to pick other people's.

Maria does not yet understand the Beneficence of General Rules. Take comfort, little fool. They have not done with you yet.

## III.

If Maria had been like other (and inferior) girls; if she had been less devoted to her father and less attentive to his needs for all these years; if she had suffered herself to go abroad a bit, and gossip, and knock about the world, as her neighbours did, she would have learnt things which now she knew not. In other words, if she had been a worse girl, she would have done better. But the retired life she had led, and, above all, the sad silences and reserves of the sick chamber, where she had so long been the only nurse of a paralytic man, had kept the stronger fibres of her nature unexercised; had almost extinguished her own instincts of communicativeness and her reliance on other people's readiness to meet communications. I sadly fear this will not be easily intelligible to everybody. But a good many of you will follow me when I say that a vast deal of human suffering goes unspoken, and, consequently, unrelieved, not because there is any pride to prevent its being told, or any unamiable reserve, but because in the suffering person the habit of communicativeness and of confidence in others' receptiveness has been destroyed by solitude and by service—the disinterested service of others. I say service quite advisedly; for a struggling life of all kinds, a life of hard work, is very unfavourable to talkativeness. Pray call to mind that exquisite touch of the Laureate's in his "Idylls of the King." Do you not remember that when Enid was suddenly made happy, after a long course of silent suffering, she could not speak?

And Enid could not say one tender word, She felt so blunt and stupid at the heart.

Maria, then, could not talk. Could not people see that she was miserable? If not, what was the use of words? Words could not speak more plainly than her face; and, if nobody read that, why should anybody understand anything she might say?

No doubt there were the consolations of religion; but simple, uneducated people think of things in the lump, and with Maria the Law and all the grave respectabilities of life had been tied up, in her mind, in the same bundle with her trust in whatever was high, and just, and good. And when the law came to her in the shape of a Destroyer and an Enemy her whole nature was so bruised that it sought no further. Suppose you had all your life looked up to some great lord as a general benefactor and friend—suppose you had always believed that his secretary or steward faithfully represented

him—was, in fact, identified with him; suppose everybody told you in the most solemn manner that the very function and nature of the secretary was to represent the goodness and the rightness of the great lord; then suppose the very first time you came in contact with this representative secretary he ill-used and crushed you. Are you quite sure of what you would do? You would go, perhaps, to the great lord and complain to him; but, perhaps, you would not. It all depends upon your capacity of doubting. If you were sceptical, you might; otherwise, you would simply feel bewildered, and as if you wanted some corner in which to cry your heart out.

This was the way Maria felt. She wanted time to "get round," as the saying is. If her heart could recover itself she would feel better; and perhaps her poor, puzzled head would see its path. But the time was not allowed to her. The unhappy child went out, stupid and vacant, and sobbed on her father's grave. Ah, if she had only been a little more sceptical, she would have had her illuminating doubts, and would have asked questions, and told her tale to gossiping neighbours! But she had only a few positive beliefs, and could do nothing but cry and wonder when they were too rudely assailed. So she sobbed on—wandering, and weary, and miserable—in by-streets, and under hedges, and in all manner of lone places; and no one took pity on her. This is not surprising, when you remember three things: first, that very few people have eyes; second, that still fewer have eyes quickened by sympathy; third, that, by a habit of the sick chamber, Maria covered up her feelings as well as she could and went about like an ordinary Christian.

The good people of Nuremberg stood for law, and, unfortunately, Maria came, this very night, into direct collision with the law. She was out of doors beyond the hour fixed by the Council for respectable people to be in bed by. For every stray bird of this kind caught by the night watchmen they got a shilling. A watchman caught Maria; claimed his shilling; put her in the watchhouse for a vagrant. She passed the night in utter stupor. All heaven and earth seemed to be in league against her helplessness.

Before the worthy magistrate, in the morning, there was brought a sorrow-faced, haggard, dishevelled, dirty young woman, charged with being out at disorderly hours. She was the child of a man who had swindled the exchequer.

"Clearly, a disreputable person. Bad antecedents. Dirty, glumpy, sullen. Next time you are brought before me, *schützelen*, you go into the house of correction, where they keep a red in pulke for peripatetic women!"

## IV.

It is a positive fact that Maria had delicate scruples about her own back. Here, again, the sacred reserves of the sick chamber had quickened, not deadened, her sensibilities; and the mere hinted threat of insulting her body made her mad. She scuttled away towards the River Pegnitz, intending to jump into it without ceremony. Those who can see anything to admire in Lucretia (of anti-Tarquian fame) may perhaps be able to think compassionately of Maria in this little crisis.

As the insulted child fled through the suburbs towards the water-side, she met Hannah, the soldier's wife, who used to come and do charring for her father. Why should the happy sympathies with the miserable, when there are so many miserable people ready to do it? The miserable to the miserable! What are elective affinities for? Now, Hannah being herself a poor, unhappy, half-fed wretch of a laundress, with two nearly-starved children, kissed Maria on the spot, and asked her home to supper. Maria told her story. "Shameful! But what did you expect, *lieblich*? Such is life, I do assure you."

"Is it?" says Maria; "then I'm glad my father is dead!"

This struck a chord in the bosom of Hannah. "Often and often, in my sorrow, when the rain has been falling cold, and the fire shining low, and the hungry children crying, often have I thought it would be a good thing to—send one of them on a long journey."

"But," says Maria, "an innocent!"

"Certainly, an innocent. I could take it to the kind Christ in heaven with me. Do you think, then, I would kill a wicked creature?"

"You would be executed yourself, of course?"

"Surely—and that is what I should like. I would kill the girl, because she is good: as for the boy, he knows a thing or two, and can fight his way in the world."

If anybody wonders that these two women could talk in this way and think in this way, he has yet a good deal to learn. Misery makes us acquainted with strange—brainfollies; and death is a very different thing to different minds, and according to the mood in which it is contemplated. However, Maria, who had just now thought of the river for herself, turned round upon Hannah, and earnestly advised her to give up that little scheme of providing for her daughter and herself. Still Hannah clung to it, and frequently spoke of it during the time she and Maria lived together. They now made one household, and a little prosperity might have healed the sick, sore souls of both.

That little prosperity did not come, but a very severe winter did; and death by famine stared the household in the face. The children cannot live another day without food. Their mother is already sick—unto death is it not?—and wants a morsel of bread! Late on in the wild, snowy night, Maria trimmed up her sordid rags about her lean limbs and went out into the storm. In the goaded simplicity of despair she went out to fetch some supper—went out to find it anywhere—on a door-step, under a snow-drift, in a kind face, in the general wretchedness, forlornness, and uncommunicativeness of the state of things which to her stood for the universe!

Now, pancakes may be made of snow, if you have also flour, and milk, or, at least, water; because the snow will supply the place of eggs. But here there was no flour to be got by walking about; and Maria forgot the time of night, and ran up against a watchman, or, rather, fell exhausted against one. A shilling for him, at any rate! As luck would have it, too, it was Maria's old friend: who gave her for the night the benignant shelter of the watch-house, and, in the morning, took her before another old friend.

This old friend was, if possible, more respectable than ever. But, as if to aggravate him, and provoke him to put in force the law (even if he had not been a man of his word), this vagrant woman had grown thinner, sallow, more dishevelled than before. This time, also, she was ragged! The woman must be put down. Take her to the house of correction.

## V.

So she was taken, and received. She was requested to wait in the front courtyard of the building; where, she could not but observe, there was a post six feet high. She was not kept waiting long, for the master of the house stood before her in a minute, and— In fact, she was tied to the whipping-post, and the whip was raised.

No, Sir, no! I am happy to say that this young creature escaped the shameful rod. A light flashed through her brain, and she shrieked out.

"Stop! Do not flog me! I deserve worse, for I have murdered a child!"

And now, for once, Maria got the benefit of the popular idea of justice. If she had murdered a child, she would have (perhaps) deserved to be flogged first and executed afterwards. But the master of the house of correction was an honest literalist, who knew the law, like any Dogberry; and, being aware that the punishment of murder was death, and not whipping, he laid down his insulting tool, and took down the woman from the whipping-post.

## VI.

You have already seen into the action of Maria's mind in this moment of insanity. I say insanity, for why our verdicts of temporary derangement should be confined to cases of suicide, I do not know; since there are a great many wrong things which are sane unnatural. Maria was methodically mad. "My friend Hannah wants to die, and take her baby to the kind Christ. I will help her. I will say I have murdered a baby and that she was my accomplice; then we shall all three go happily to heaven together."

Accordingly, when Maria was examined, she said Hannah had helped her, and hidden the corpse in a wood.



## VII.

To the astonishment of Maria, poor Hannah, when confronted with her, did not take kindly to this arrangement. She stoutly denied the charge, and passionately reproached her friend. Maria persisted throughout four examinations, making signs to Hannah with her eyes, her lips, and her hands—which, however, the poor soldier's wife, who had been very ill, did not catch the meaning of. At the fifth examination Hannah was threatened with the torture. The cruel implements were brought in; she was bidden to confess or to strip. Then Maria dashed up to her, seized her hands as well as she could for the ropes that bound them, and said, "Dear friend, all will be provided for; and your daughter will be put in the orphan-house."

In a moment the whole meaning of Maria's procedure now flashed across the mind of Hannah, and she confessed to her share in the murder. The instruments were taken away, and everything was put in order for the execution of the two prisoners. Hannah took the sacrament with Maria, thanked her, comforted her, blessed her. "You have saved me, dear, from doing a deadly sin. If you had not done as you have done, I should have really murdered my little Anachen and myself. Far better is it that we should both die by the hands of others for crimes that we have never committed."

It passed Hannah's faculties to guess what kind angel had put it into the mind of Maria to adopt this plan. They would now go, she thought, with white souls, to the arms of the kind Christ; and, for the little girl left behind, others would do what they two could not do—feed and shelter her.

But as the day of the execution drew nigh, Maria's natural love of truth began to break up the continuity of the mood in which she had taken this step; and Hannah could not reconcile her to it, use what arguments she would. No doubt her arguments would have been such as these:—"The law and the world are unjust and cruel to us. You they would have flogged; both of us they starve. All we do, then, is to give them a chance of wronging us in another way. They will be doing a less wrong than if they flogged you or starved us both; for they believe we are guilty of a crime for which death is a just punishment. As for ourselves, we simply make our choice of miseries. All we say to the world and the law is, 'Yes; kill us, if you please. But we would rather die by your sword than by hunger and one of us will miss the indignity of your stripes. It is all for the best that we should die, and there is a heaven beyond.'"

Nothing could exceed the serenity and lofty sweetness of Hannah's mood as the time drew nigh that was to end her life and her friend's.

## VIII.

When the bell rang for the dreadful march to the Blood-Steel, Hannah was even cheerful; but Maria had to be dragged to the foot of the scaffold. Hannah went first up the steps, pausing on the way to kiss her friend. "Dear, we shall in a few moments be with the kind Christ!" Then the executioners stripped her shoulders and tied up her hair, so that her head might with the greater ease be held up, and her neck be well exposed to the blow of the sword. "Stop, stop! for the dear God's sake, stop! she is innocent!"

Shrieking out in this way, Maria fell, bound and staggering, at the knees of the officers and ministers, and poured out the whole truth in an incoherent volley. "Kill me! but not her, not her!" said this wretched girl.

Then the clergymen and the officers appealed to Hannah. "Maria has now told the truth, and I am sorry she has. I confirm what she says, only to take from her mind the load which weighs upon it. By her impatience she has spoiled all. A few moments more, and we should both have been in the presence of the dear God."

Then, amid the murmurs of the people, who insisted that the execution should be stayed, a message was sent by the hands of the Adjutant to the Townhall for further instructions.

## IX.

To the credit of Nuremberg, it was the rule for the three oldest men in the council to be in attendance at the Townhall while an execution was going on, in case of a hitch. To this sacred three were reported the explanations of Maria and Hannah, which could hardly have been anything but modified reproaches:—"We could not live; why should we not die?"—it is Hannah who speaks—"my friend told the truth, and we were going to flog her. She told a lie, and you believed it. Then, when I myself told the truth you would not believe it; you threatened to stretch me on the rack till you could see daylight through my body, and my wrists are still black and sore with your infernal ropes. And now, when we both tell the truth once more, I suppose you will again, in your wisdom, refuse to believe it. And we hope you will."

While the Adjutant was gone to the Townhall for instructions what to do with these two half-starved, hardworked, badgered, bewildered wretches, who had not, for months, had victuals enough in their bodies to make blood enough for their brains to be strong—one of the clergymen amused himself by insulting them; that is to say, he criticised their conduct; went into the subject; turned it in and out; said how *very* wrong it was; and other such little matters. Could he help it? Not he: he was a fool, and wrought after his kind. But he ought to have remembered that he stood on a vantage-ground. He had had his victuals regularly, and he was not going to be beheaded—as, in all probability, these women were.

## X.

The answer came from the three wise men of Nuremberg. "Let the execution proceed," said the three wise men; which was done. So in Nuremberg that day the law was vindicated by the slaughter of two mad, hungry washerwomen—both beheaded and both innocent.

You can think it over, and we will talk of it in the morning.\*

## EPILOGUE ON CHRISTMAS DAY.

"It seems to me that these women got what they asked for, and could not complain."

That might be nearer the truth, you see, if they had not been driven into the false position which *made* them ask, by the pressure of the same institutions which afterwards took this revenge. These were both women of more than common goodness; and, if they had been worse to begin with, might have been better to end with—not better in the eye of Heaven, but better in the eye of the law. It is quite probable that Hannah and Maria had more goodness in them than the respectable citizens that condemned them to die—just as many a man who falls into the clutch of the law for dishonesty may be substantially better than hundreds of railway directors, stockjobbers, and fraudulent traders who sin safely and pass for good citizens.

"Then, what lesson are we to draw, after all?"

The lesson, at least, of charity—not a bad one for the season. Let us be kind in thinking of our scapegoats. Let us remember that in the enormous complication of life, others, better than we, may be bearing penalties in vindication of the laws by which we are protected. Let us remember how small a matter may turn the scale of dispute and alter the course of events. Dinner or no dinner may make all the difference. A man with an empty stomach may get excited beyond all power of self-control; when, if he had only eaten a biscuit, he might have tided safely over the difficult passage in his life. You stand for law? Good! Only remember what it is you mean when you say that. You mean that all wrong-doing must be expiated. No doubt. But, look here before you go to your roast beef and pudding—look here. You admit that the rule falls heavily at times on the comparatively innocent. Then, recollect that in every case of over-excitation the excess of pain is, in reality, a sacrifice, on the part of the sufferer, to your security. Recollect, I say, that our lives are vicious all round; that every living soul has certainly a share in the wrong-doing of every other living soul; and you will not, I should think, find charity difficult to practise between Christmas Days as well as upon Christmas Days.

W. B. RANDES.

I am told that Coleridge has somewhere referred to this true story. I have so far spared the reader's feelings as to suppress (entirely) one of its most shocking features.

## THE CHRISTMAS PROSPECTS OF OUR POOR RELATIONS.

It is, of course, hard to say, honest poverty is so prodigiously wary of betraying itself; but, if certain signs and tokens are trustworthy, this will not be such a very hard Christmas with the poorest of our brethren.

Nor is this comfortable conclusion based on tabular statements and statistics. It is not because the casual ward of St. Gudeon-bone's-in-the-East is not more than half full, or that, in happy consequence of a dearth of applicants, the soup-coppers at the charitable kitchen remain quite full, that I feel authorised to make the cheering announcement. It is because of the state of the market—of Poverty-market. I have spent an hour there, and have seen with my eyes and heard with my ears, and know all about it.

Of these markets there are more than two dozen, probably; but it makes no difference to me, and under the circumstances, for they are all alike—like as oysters in a barrel. The flavour of one is the flavour of the whole; and the market-places of the poor may be as fairly sampled at a single dip. If Dutch places are three-halfpence each in Brick-lane, Bethnal-green, they will be at four for sixpence in Strutton-ground, Westminster—not a farthing more or less. If clod of beef is at fivepence in Leather-lane, a journey to Clare-market, with a view to buying it at fourpence-halfpenny, will be fruitless. The ginshop doors of Whitecross-street, and the Lower-marsh at Lambeth, and at Brill-row in Somers-town, swing in unison, as though held by a single string; and behind the doors, and between them and the flashy ginshop-bars it is uniformly high tide of roaring, turbulent drunkenness, or dismal low tide and a silent shore—yellow, strewn with sawdust, like the sands of the beach, and waiting for the flood. At such times, when you see Mr. Speckles, of the "Upas Tree," high to Liquorpond-street, yawning in discontented idleness, you may, if you happen to be of a speculative turn, take small odds that a hundred similar licensed jaws are elsewhere as dementally ajar.

Or the depth of London poverty may be gauged by a little observation of the frequenters of either of these market-places. Wait until the gas is lit, and then (it should be on a Saturday night or a Christmas Eve) manfully make a plunge, and go with the human tide that rolls and surges through the narrow of, say, Strutton-ground, Westminster. Note the bricklayers, and the masons, and the carpenters—you will know them readily enough; and if you find amongst them a goodly sprinkling of those who, by the angle of their short shirts and the cock of their cap-peaks, are evidently breeches-proud, you may know without further inquiry that "things are fairish." Likewise, it is a good sign to see flowers in the bonnets of the women, and a "keeper" as well as a wedding-ring adorning the marriage finger; indeed, this latter is a very significant sign, as will be at once understood when it is explained—I have it from a credible party, and one who would not "lend his ears," or, indeed, anything else, except in matters that were reliable—that, "as soon as ever things get shaky, the 'keeper' and father's Sunday silk handkerchief are the first things put away. One or two may come at brisk times to admit of going to the play or an unexpected rally, and go with the common run of business and without particular notice; but when they drop in three and four of a morning we know how things are going, and could tell you almost to a day when we should be pretty full of wellington boots, and fancy waistcoats, and summer shawls and gowas. It's a long chain, if you take the separate links of it; but, lor! how soon it's wound up! If there's a largish family they'll come at the clock in six weeks; and I tell you, Sir, when you see a working man pledging his clock, you may know that he's pretty well wound up. Yes, Sir, it's getting close to the wedding-ring then. That I look on as the *last* link in the chain; and it's curious, too, considering how they go together, as one may say, that the keeper should be the first link and the wedding-ring the last."

"Especially," said I, "as the value of this last link—I mean the pecuniary value—must be considerably more than that of many of the other links."

"Well, if you come to that, you know," said Mr. Backitt, shaking his head dubiously, "upon my word, and although they're lumber-some, and take up a deal of room which can be ill spared, I'd rather take in flock beds, and I've a good mind to say flat-irons, than wedding-rings. The worst of it is, the thinner and more worn the things are there's the more fussing over them. They come cheerful enough sometimes, then they are good thick rings, without more than a year or so of wear taken out of them, and it is buxom young women who bring them, pleasant, and not unwilling to pass a little joke with one; it is the middle-aged and the old women who are the teasers. They never think of pulling off the ring before they get into the box, and there you may see 'em wetting their bony old knuckles, and trying to screw it off with their finger in their mouth, and perhaps piping their eye all the time. You might think the picture was a funny one by only hearing a description of it; but you'd be of quite another mind if you came to see it. The sums they'll ask on the thready old things, too, would frighten one if he was not well used to it; they never think that their wedding-ring is of less value than when they bought it; indeed, I really do believe they think it is *more* valuable; and they'll talk in that earnest way, bless you, that you'll find yourself lending quite the melting price if you are not careful. I generally get out of serving 'em if I can—turn 'em over to my young man—all a business fellow, Sir, I can tell you, and will prosper. The old women don't come it over him. 'Now then! how much on the old hoop?' says he, and then slips it on his little finger, and writes off the ticket as coolly as though he was taking in a dog-collar."

However, to return to my subject at the point where Mr. Backitt broke in upon it; if, as you elbow your way through the crowd in Poverty-market, you discover such signs of prosperity as I have mentioned, you may make your mind easy that business is slack at the workhouse bakeries within and without the city, east, west, north, and south. On the other hand, if the majority of the men you meet wear their heads deep in their capes, if they wear their jackets buttoned high and both their hands in the pockets thereof; if their eyes are downcast, as though good luck had somehow escaped from them into the gutter, and they were there looking for it; if such as have their wives with them allow them to press ahead a pace or so (the reader may have observed how that sometimes when a team came on a bit of heavy road the arrangement of the cattle will be altered, and, until the difficulty is surmounted, the great brown horse gives precedence to the little grey one, who, without half his strength, has six times his capacity for manoeuvring and wriggling out of ruts); if the said wives have pursed mouths and eyes eloquent of arithmetic; if their thin shawls hang squarely at the shoulder parts; if at the greengrocer's a monstrous quantity of potatoes are shot into their big-bellied market-baskets, you may know that wherever you meet the poor man in and about London he is "hard up."

If throughout the year there is a season during which more than any other a poor man is in danger of getting "hard up" it is most decidedly at Christmas time. He is so much at the mercy of the weather. If he is a bricklayer or a bricklayer's labourer, or a stonemason, or a plasterer, or a navvy, or a gardener, or any one of a dozen other avocations which might be enumerated, a heavy frost falling in the night debars him from bread-winning as effectually as though fetters had grown to his wrists while he slept; and, without being either a gardener or a bricklayer, it is easy enough to imagine what it must be to be the frostbound father of a numerous family and Christmas within a few days' stage. How the enthralled man must find himself eagerly listening to his wife's prognostications concerning her corns and a change in the weather. How irritated he must feel to hear her grinding at the same superabundance at the end of a fortnight and the frost still pinning the earth with the tenacity of a bulldog at the throat of an enemy! How he must be tempted to kick that provoking cat, who *will* persist in sitting with her back to the fire, a sure indication of frost! Nor is frost the only enemy with whom the poor willing worker has often to contend against for his Christmas beef and pudding. Daylight is but nine hours long; and even though he allow himself no longer midday rest than suffices for the swallowing of his scanty dinner, "three quarters" is all the time he

can make. Cowardly coughs, and fevers, and influenzas attack his little children at their weak and worn boot-soles. The rent collector must clear his books, by hook or by crook, he says—and his tenant knows what that means—by the twenty-fourth. Dr. Bunney sends his lad with a sharp, little note, reminding the already much-perplexed parent that little Charley, who has commenced cutting his teeth, has not yet been paid for! "It never rains but it pours!" says the poor fellow, as, after consulting his good lady, he returns written word by Mr. Bunney's lad that Mrs. Ginnypeg is not very well, and would be glad of a call when Dr. Bunney is coming her way; and that as regards the little bill it will be an accommodation if she is allowed to settle the two together. Poor Mr. Ginnypeg! It's all very fine for the carol singers to bawl "Let nothing you dismay!"

Nevertheless, and all things considered, I should judge from the signs and tokens already hinted at that the poor man has known Christmases which have caused him much more dismay than the present one. My "market intelligence" is derived from Brick-lane, Bethnal-green, and, goodness knows, if there exists a market deserving the prefix "poverty," this is the one.

I have spent an hour among the fierce gas-jets and the clash of butchers' knives and steels, and I have said "Buy, buy, buy!" and I am of opinion that Mr. Ginnypeg's prospects of a Christmas dinner are at least "pretty fair." Mind, I don't by any means wish to convey the idea that I found Brick-lane overflowing with milk and honey—I did not expect to find it so; but, as an honest reporter, I am bound to say that, after all I had recently read of this plague-parish, I expected to find a leaner and more drouthy state of things than appeared.

The butchers' shops, from the first-floor windows to the stall-boards, were hung with ribs, and sirloins, and aitch-bones, and shoulders and legs of mutton fat enough to excite the admiration of an Esquimaux. At Mr. Faggetty's, the pork and sausage shop, there hung a pig of such vast dimensions that made it a wonder, the natural perversity of porcine nature considered, how they ever managed to drive, or back, or sling him through Mr. Faggetty's narrow slaughter-house doorway. There were fat geese, and fat turkeys, and holly-berry devices on bladders of lard in the cheese-mongers' windows, and on the surface of half-tubs of butter. Good signs every one of them, and significant of feasting, but not the signs and tokens I especially allude to, for all that.

It was the *absence* and not the presence of certain eatables from Poverty-market that impressed me favourably. Chief of all was the almost entire absence of fish—of fresh fish, understand (of dried, in the form of haddocks and bloaters, there was an unusual quantity, which was satisfactory, inasmuch as it betokened luxuries for tea and breakfast). Now, anyone at all conversant with the ways of poverty, knows that the quantity of fish it consumes is enormous. And no wonder. For sixpence a piled-up dish may smoke on the dinner-table; whereas, if the money was invested in butcher's meat, even of the coarsest and scraggiest description, a dinner-plate would contain it, with a fair margin for potatoes. At ordinary times, the most conspicuous feature of Poverty-market is fish. Every third stall is a fish-stall; tons of plaice, and soles, and cod are sold in a single market-place in a single day. When fish fails, there is consternation among poor mothers, and general cheerfulness among butchers with mutton-scraggs and offal to dispose of.

Yet, to be always having fish for dinner, even though he is fond of it, has about it a smack of poverty under which the poor man does not rest easy. With his fair five shillings a day, he will not object to fish for supper as often as you please; but he'll have beef, or mutton, or bacon for dinner. In fact, his patronage of fish lasts only during his "hard up" periods, and by this token to-night he is *not* hard up; the few straggling fish-stalls have no attraction for him or his wife; their sole attention is for the butcher and the abounding animal fatness about them.

Another ordinary feature of Poverty-market, now pleasantly missed, is the stall whereon is sold penny lots of vegetables for the pot—the three turnips, the onion, the half carrot, and the leek. These are the ingredients which, with a pound of scrap meat, form the family "stew." Doubtless there are worse things than a stew for dinner, but it is not quite the thing for Christmas. If nothing better may be had, why—! But, thank goodness, something better *may* be had this Christmas, and the penny vegetable lots are not wanted. I counted but four from one end of Brick-lane to the other, and even they had cheerfully added horseradish to their business.

Another good sign was that the lemon trade was brisk. Moses and Isaac, while they despised the great Christian festival, were not above making a shilling out of it, and elbowing their way through with their mat baskets over their shoulder and a double handful of the yellow fruit, shouting "two a paddy lebbod" as earnestly as though their lives depended on the sale. Now the lemon and destitution are not likely to be found together; one can scarcely imagine a dinnerless family sitting round a yearning fregate sucking lemons. No; the lemon is good, for its peel sake, in the manufacture of apple-pies; it is desirable as adding pungency to the glass of grog. Probably it is useful in many other ways; but the two mentioned are enough for the purpose, and I can only repeat that when I saw so many lemons about I observed to myself, "Here's another good sign."

I might go on to a column's length in my enumeration of good signs. I might speak of the crowded state of the shops of the grocers at which pudding-clubs were held; of the prevalence of toysellers; of the prodigious quantity of holly and mistletoe about; of the roaring trade driven by the man with the newly-invented roasting-jack, and who exhibited a wooden goose revolving in the most satisfactory manner. I might discuss these things and many more, but I have no time; it is now nearly ten o'clock, and when I left Mr. Backitt, in the early part of the evening, he had said, "Just give me a look in about ten o'clock. I'll tell you what sort of a Christmas it is with 'em." So I made haste to Mr. Backitt's.

There is no affectation of gentility about Mr. Backitt's premises—no "offices next door," or boxes with catch-latches in the passage for shame-faced poverty with a watch to pawn; the space before Mr. Backitt's counter is nearly as large as that before an ordinary ginshop bar, and as free. Like a ginshop door, that of Mr. Backitt is kept ajar by a strap, and I gave it a push, with the intention of walking in. But I could not push it far enough to squeeze in; the shop was crowded chiefly by women and girls; there was much gossiping chatter, a frequency of abusive remarks addressed to Mr. Backitt and his perspiring young man, and a strong odour of gin, so that the likeness of Mr. Backitt's place of business to a ginshop did not cease at the strap-held door.

"Will you allow me to pass, Miss?" I said to a young lady of thirteen, who, although already borne down by bundles, was fiercely demanding another "Fashley shawl—name of Tigg!"

"No," said she "I shan't! Give us hold of your tickets, and I'll give 'em over to Samuel, if you like."

"But I haven't any tickets," said I.

"Oh, you want to leave!" observed the damsel, laughing. "I wish you luck, old boy; they won't take anything in, bless you, while there's so much deliveries. It's as much as they'll 'part.' There was a poor soul, about half an hour ago, who wanted her old man's westkit away from his trousers, and do you think they'd let her have it? No. Mr. Jackanapes Samuel says, says he—"

"Shaw! three shillings; Tigg!" at that moment belowned the young man in question.

"Here," screamed Miss Tigg, poking up a long parcel, as an indication where she was to be found; and having secured the "Fashley," she went off, saying no more to me.

For full a quarter of an hour I tried hard to catch Mr. Backitt's eye, but in vain; it was as much, nay, more, than he could do to count up interest and take money, and bully the boy up the spout for not throwing down the parcels with greater expedition. Meanwhile, the mob came swarming in, and the clamour became so deafening that I was glad to escape, without having Mr. Backitt's opinion as to "the sort of Christmas it was with 'em," it is true; but I much doubt if he could have regarded that till full of redemption-money, and pronounced Christmas, 1863, a very hard one.

J. G.



HOW "MOSSOO" GOGO, HAVING RECEIVED AN INVITATION TO DINE AT CHARMING COTTAGE,  
MANAGES TO SPEND HIS CHRISTMAS DAY.



"Where is Charming Cottage?"



"Mossoo's" First Christmas Salutation.



Before

and



After



The Ball.



The Restoration.



The Reward.



Commemorative Medal.



The Roof of the Omnibus, though cold,



Is convenient for looking in at first-floor windows.



"Palsamben! Is this Christmas a Hebrew festival?"



"Mossoo" alights.



"Oh! where is it I shall dine?"



Inquires the way of a native—dumb!



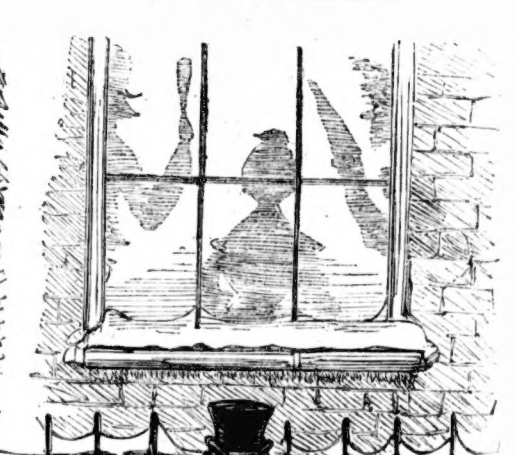
Of another—blind!



Of another —!



"Mossoo" enjoys a fine view of Primrose-hill.



Cold without!



He meets two more natives, neither blind nor dumb.



They show him the way.  
(6 P.M., dinner time).



The cry for help on recovering consciousness.  
— The answer.



He is fined 5s. for sleeping in the open air.  
"Perfidious Albion, adieu!"